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THE
O D Y S S E Y
OF
H O M E R.

VOL. I.



THE
O D Y S S E Y
OF
H O M E R.

TRANSLATED BY
ALEXANDER POPE, ESQ.

A NEW EDITION.

VOL. I.

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A
GENERAL VIEW
OF
THE EPIC POEM,
AND OF THE
ILIAD AND ODYSSEY.

EXTRACTED FROM BOSSU.

SECT. I.

THE fables of poets were originally employed in representing the Divine Nature*, according to the notion then conceived of it. This sublime subject occasioned the first poets to be called divines, and poetry the language of the gods. They divided the divine attributes into so many persons; because the infirmity of a human mind cannot sufficiently conceive, or explain, so much power and action in a simplicity so great and indivisible as that of God. And perhaps they were also jealous of the advantages they reaped from such excellent and exalted learning, and of which they thought the vulgar part of mankind was not worthy.

* Of the Nature of Epic Poetry.

They could not describe the operations of this almighty cause, without speaking at the same time of its effects: so that to divinity they added physiology, and treated of both, without quitting the umbrages of their allegorical expressions.

But man being the chief and most noble of all that God produced, and nothing being so proper, or more useful to poets than this subject, they added it to the former, and treated of the doctrine of morality after the same manner as they did that of divinity and philosophy: and from morality thus treated, is formed that kind of poem and fable which we call epic.

The poets did the same in morality, that the divines had done in divinity. But that infinite variety of the actions and operations of the Divine Nature (to which our understanding bears so small a proportion) did as it were force them upon dividing the single idea of the only one God into several persons, under the different names of Jupiter, Juno, Neptune, and the rest.

And, on the other hand, the nature of moral philosophy being such, as never to treat of things in particular, but in general, the epic poets were obliged to unite in one single idea, in one and the same person, and in an action which appeared singular, all that looked like it in different persons, and in various actions; which might be thus contained as so many species under their genus.

The presence of the Deity, and the care such an august cause is to be supposed to take about any

action, obliges the poet to represent this action as great, important, and managed by kings^b and princes. It obliges him likewise to think and speak in an elevated way above the vulgar, and in a style that may in some sort keep up the character of the divine persons he introduces. 'To this end serve the poetical and figurative expression, and the majesty of the heroic verse.

But all this, being divine and surprising, may quite ruin all probability: therefore the poet should take a peculiar care as to that point, since his chief aim is to instruct, and without probability any action is less likely to persuade.

Lastly, since precepts ought to be concise^c, to be the more easily conceived, and less oppress the memory; and since nothing can be more effectual to this end than proposing one single idea, and collecting all things so well together, as to be present to our minds all at once; therefore the poets have reduced all to one single^d action, under one and the same design, and in a body whose members and parts should be homogeneous.

What we have observed of the nature of the epic poem gives us a just idea of it, and we may define it thus:

'The epic poem is a discourse invented by art, to

^b *Res gestæ regumque ducumque.* Hor. Art. Poet.

^c — — — Cui mens divini^{or} atque os

Magna sonaturum, des Nominis hujus honorem. Horat.

^d *Quicquid præcipies esto brevis, ut citò dicta*

Percipiant animi dociles, teneantque fideles. Hor. Poet.

^e *Denique sit quodvis simplex duntaxat, et unum.* Hor. Poet.

form the manners, by such instructions as are disguised under the allegories of some one important action, which is related in verse, after a probable, diverting, and surprising manner.'

SECT. II.

IN every design which a man deliberately undertakes, the end he proposes is the first thing in his mind, and that by which he governs the whole work, and all its parts: thus since the end of the epic poem is to regulate the manners, it is with this first view the poet ought to begin.

But there is a great difference between the philosophical and the poetical doctrine of manners. The schoolmen content themselves with treating of virtues and vices in general: the instructions they give are proper for all states, people, and for all ages. But the poet has a nearer regard to his own country, and the necessities of his own nation. With this design he makes choice of some piece of morality, the most proper and just he can imagine: and in order to press this home, he makes less use of the force of reasoning, than of the power of insinuation; accommodating himself to the particular customs and inclinations of those who are to be the subject, or the readers, of his work.

Let us now see how Homer has acquitted himself in these respects.

^r The Fable of the *Iliad*.

He saw the Grecians, for whom he designed his poem, were divided into as many states as they had capital cities. Each was a body politic apart, and had its form of government independent from all the rest. And yet these distinct states were very often obliged to unite together in one body against their common enemies. These were two very different sorts of government, such as could not be comprehended in one maxim of morality, and in one single poem.

The poet therefore has made two distinct fables of them. The one is for Greece in general, united into one body, but composed of parts independent on each other; and the other for each particular state, considered as they were in time of peace, without the former circumstances and the necessity of being united.

As for the first sort of government, in the union, or rather in the confederacy, of many independent states, experience has always made it appear, 'That nothing so much causes success as a due subordination, and a right understanding among the chief commanders. And, on the other hand, the inevitable ruin of such confederacies proceeds from the heats, jealousies, and ambition of the different leaders, and the discontents of submitting to a single general.' All sorts of states, and in particular the Grecians, had dearly experienced this truth. So that the most useful and necessary instruction that could be given them, was, to lay before their eyes the loss which both the people and the princes must of necessity

suffer, by the ambition, discord, and obstinacy of the latter.

Homer then has taken for the foundation of his fable this great truth; that a misunderstanding between princes is the ruin of their own states. 'I sing (says he) the anger of Achilles, so pernicious to the Grecians, and the cause of so many heroes deaths, occasioned by the discord and separation of Agamemnon and that prince.'

But that this truth may be completely and fully known, there is need of a second to support it. It is necessary in such a design, not only to represent the confederate states at first disagreeing among themselves, and from thence unfortunate, but to show the same states afterwards reconciled and united, and of consequence victorious.

Let us now see how he has joined all these in one general action.

'Several princes independent on one another were united against a common enemy. The person whom they had elected their general, offers an affront to the most valiant of all the confederates. This offended prince is so far provoked as to relinquish the union, and obstinately refuse to fight for the common cause. This misunderstanding gives the enemy such an advantage, that the allies are very near quitting their design with dishonour. He himself who made the separation is not exempt from sharing the misfortune which he brought upon his party. For having permitted his intimate friend to succour them in a great necessity, this friend is killed by the enemy's

general. Thus the contending princes being both made wiser at their own cost, are reconciled, and unite again: then this valiant prince not only obtains the victory in the public cause, but revenges his private wrongs by killing with his own hands the author of the death of his friend.'

This is the first platform of the poem, and the fiction which reduces into one important and universal action all the particulars upon which it turns.

In the next place it must be rendered probable by the circumstances of times, places, and persons: some persons must be found out, already known by history or otherwise, whom we may with probability make the actors and personages of this fable. Homer has made choice of the siege of Troy, and feigned that this action happened there. To a phantom of his brain, whom he would paint valiant and choleric, he has given the name of Achilles; that of Agamemnon to his general; that of Hector to the enemy's commander, and so to the rest.

Besides, he was obliged to accommodate himself to the manners, customs, and genius of the Greeks his auditors, the better to make them attend to the instruction of his poem, and to gain their approbation by praising them; so that they might the better forgive him the representation of their own faults in some of his chief personages. He admirably discharges all these duties, by making these brave princes and those victorious people all Grecians, and the fathers of those he had a mind to commend.

But not being content, in a work of such a length,

to propose only the principal point of the moral, and to fill up the rest with useless ornaments and foreign incidents, he extends this moral by all its necessary consequences. As, for instance, in the subject before us, it is not enough to know, that a good understanding ought always to be maintained among confederates; it is likewise of equal importance, that if there happens any division, care must be taken to keep it secret from the enemy, that their ignorance of this advantage may prevent their making use of it. And in the second place, when their concord is but counterfeit and only in appearance, one should never press the enemy too closely; for this would discover the weakness which we ought to conceal from them.

The episode of Patroclus most admirably furnishes us with these two instructions; for when he appeared in the arms of Achilles, the Trojans, who took him for that prince now reconciled and united to the confederates, immediately gave ground, and quitted the advantages they had before over the Greeks. But Patroclus, who should have been contented with this success, presses upon Hector too boldly, and by obliging him to fight, soon discovers that it was not the true Achilles who was clad in his armour, but a hero of much inferior prowess. So that Hector kills him, and regains those advantages which the Trojans had lost, on the opinion that Achilles was reconciled.

S E C T. III.

THE ²Odyssey was not designed, like the Iliad, for the instruction of all the states of Greece joined in one body, but for each state in particular. As a state is composed of two parts, the head which commands and the members which obey, there are instructions requisite to both, to teach the one to govern, and the others to submit to government.

There are two virtues necessary to one in authority, prudence to order, and care to see his orders put in execution. The prudence of a politician is not acquired but by a long experience in all sorts of business, and by an acquaintance with all the different forms of governments and states. The care of the administration suffers not him that has the government to rely upon others, but requires his own presence; and kings who are absent from their states are in danger of losing them, and give occasion to great disorders and confusion.

These two points may be easily united in one and the same man. 'A king forsakes his kingdom to visit the courts of several princes, where he learns the manners and customs of different nations. From hence there naturally arises a vast number of incidents, of dangers, and of adventures, very useful for a political institution. On the other side, this absence gives way to the disorders which happen in his own

² The fable of the Odyssey.

kingdom, and which end not till his return, whose presence only can re-establish all things.' Thus the absence of a king has the same effects in this fable, as the division of the princes had in the former.

The subjects have scarce any need but of one general maxim, which is, To suffer themselves to be governed, and to obey faithfully, whatever reason they may imagine against the orders they receive. It is easy to join this instruction with the other, by bestowing on this wise and industrious prince such subjects, as in his absence would rather follow their own judgment than his commands; and by demonstrating the misfortunes which this disobedience draws upon them, the evil consequences which almost infallibly attend these particular notions, which are entirely different from the general idea of him who ought to govern.

But as it was necessary that the princes in the *Iliad* should be cholerick and quarrelsome, so it is necessary in the fable of the *Odyssey* that the chief person should be sage and prudent. This raises a difficulty in the fiction; because this person ought to be absent for the two reasons aforementioned, which are essential to the fable, and which constitute the principal aim of it: but he cannot absent himself, without offending against another maxim of equal importance, viz. That a king should upon no account leave his country.

It is true, there are sometimes such necessities as sufficiently excuse the prudence of a politician in this point. But such a necessity is a thing important

enough of itself to supply matter for another poem, and this multiplication of the action would be vicious. To prevent which, in the first place, this necessity and the departure of the hero must be disjoined from the poem; and in the second place, the hero having been obliged to absent himself, for a reason antecedent to the action and placed distinct from the fable, he ought not so far to embrace this opportunity of instructing himself, as to absent himself voluntarily from his own government. For at this rate, his absence would be merely voluntary, and one might with reason lay to his charge all the disorders which might arise.

Thus in the constitution of the fable he ought not to take for his action, and for the foundation of his poem, the departure of a prince from his own country, nor his voluntary stay in any other place; but his return, and this return retarded against his will. This is the first idea Homer gives us of it. ^a His hero appears at first in a desolate island, sitting upon the side of the sea, which with tears in his eyes he looks upon as the obstacle that had so long opposed his return, and detained him from revisiting his own dear country.

And lastly, since this forced delay might more naturally and usually happen to such as make voyages by sea, Homer has judiciously made choice of a prince whose kingdom was in an island.

Let us see then how he has feigned all this action, making his hero a person in years, because years

^a *Odyssey* v.

are requisite to instruct a man in prudence and policy.

'A prince had been obliged to forsake his native country, and to head an army of his subjects in a foreign expedition. Having gloriously performed this enterprise, he was marching home again, and conducting his subjects to his own state; but, spite of all the attempts with which the eagerness to return had inspired him, he was stopt by the way by tempests for several years, and cast upon several countries differing from each other in manners and government. In these dangers his companions, not always following his orders, perished through their own fault. The grandees of his country strangely abuse his absence, and raise no small disorders at home. They consume his estate, conspire to destroy his son, would constrain his queen to accept of one of them for her husband; and indulge themselves in all violence, so much the more, because they were persuaded he would never return. But at last he returns, and discovering himself only to his son and some others, who had continued firm to him, he is an eye-witness of the insolence of his enemies, punishes them according to their deserts, and restores to his island that tranquillity and repose to which they had been strangers during his absence.'

As the truth, which serves for foundation to this fiction, is, that the absence of a person from his own home, or his neglect of his own affairs, is the cause of great disorders; so the principal point of the action, and the most essential one, is the absence of the hero.

This fills almost all the poem; for not only this real absence lasted several years, but even when the hero returned he does not discover himself: and this prudent disguise, from whence he reaped so much advantage, has the same effect upon the authors of the disorders, and all others who knew him not, as his real absence had before, so that he is absent as to them till the very moment of their punishment.

After the poet had thus composed his fable, and joined the fiction to the truth, he then makes choice of Ulysses the king of the isle of Ithaca, to maintain the character of his chief personage, and bestowed the rest upon Telemachus, Penelope, Antinous, and others, whom he calls by what names he pleases.

I shall not here insist upon the many excellent advices, which are so many parts and natural consequences of the fundamental truth; and which the poet very dexterously lays down in those fictions which are the episodes and members of the entire action. Such for instance are these advices:—Not to intrude oneself into the mysteries of government, which the prince keeps secret: this is represented to us by the winds shut up in a bull's hide, which the miserable companions of Ulysses would needs be so foolish as to pry into. Not to suffer oneself to be led away by the seeming charms of an idle and inactive life, to which the Sirens song invited.¹ Not to suffer oneself to be sensualized by pleasures, like those who were changed into brutes by Circe: and a great many other points of morality necessary for all sorts of people.

¹ Improba Siren desidia. Horat.

This poem is more useful to the people than the Iliad, where the subjects suffer rather by the ill conduct of their princes than through their own mis-carriages. But in the Odyssey it is not the fault of Ulysses that is the ruin of his subjects. 'This wise prince leaves untried no method to make them partakers of the benefit of his return. Thus the poet in the Iliad says, 'He sings the anger of Achilles, which had caused the death of so many Grecians;' and on the contrary, in the 'Odyssey he tells his readers, 'That the subjects perished through their own fault.'

S E C T. IV.

ARISTOTLE¹ bestows great encomiums upon Homer for the simplicity of his design, because he has included in one single part all that happened at the siege of Troy. And to this he opposes the ignorance of some poets who imagined that the unity of the fable or action was sufficiently preserved by the unity of the hero; and who composed their Theseids, Hera-cleids, and the like, wherein they only heaped up in one poem every thing that happened to one personage.

He finds fault with those poets who were for reducing the unity of the fable into the unity of the hero, because one man may have performed several adventures which it is impossible to reduce under any one general and simple head. This reducing of all

* Αυτων γαρ σφείεργον ἀπὸ τοῦ ἡρώου ὄλοντο. Odys. i.

¹ Of the unity of the fable.

'things to unity and simplicity is what Horace likewise makes his first rule.

'*Denique sit quodvis simplex duntaxat, et unum.*'

According to these rules, it will be allowable to make use of several fables, (or to speak more correctly) of several incidents which may be divided into several fables; provided they are so ordered that the unity of the fable be not spoiled. This liberty is still greater in the epic poem, because it is of a larger extent, and ought to be entire and complete.

I will explain myself more distinctly by the practice of Homer.

No doubt but one might make four distinct fables out of these four following instructions:

1. 'Division between those of the same party exposes them entirely to their enemies.'

2. 'Conceal your weakness, and you will be dreaded as much as if you had none of those imperfections of which they are ignorant.'

3. 'When your strength is only feigned, and founded only in the opinion of others, never venture so far as if your strength was real.'

4. 'The more you agree together, the less hurt can your enemies do you.'

It is plain, I say, that each of these particular maxims might serve for the ground-work of a fiction, and one might make four distinct fables out of them. May not one then put all these into one single epo-

pea? Not unless one single fable can be made out of all. The poet indeed may have so much skill as to unite all into one body as members and parts, each of which taken asunder would be imperfect; and if he joins them so, this conjunction shall be no hindrance at all to the unity and the regular simplicity of the fable. This is what Homer has done with such success in the composition of the *Iliad*.

1. 'The division between Achilles and his allies tended to the ruin of their designs.' 2. 'Patroclus comes to their relief in the armour of this hero, and Hector retreats.' 3. 'But this young man, pushing the advantage which his disguise gave him too far, ventures to engage with Hector himself; but not being master of Achilles's strength (whom he only represented in outward appearance) he is killed, and by this means leaves the Grecian affairs in the same disorder, from which in that disguise he came to free them.' 4. 'Achilles, provoked at the death of his friend, is reconciled, and revenges his loss by the death of Hector.' These various incidents being thus united, do not make different actions and fables, but are only the incomplete and unfinished parts of one and the same action and fable, which alone, when taken thus complexly, can be said to be complete and entire: and all these maxims of the moral are easily reduced into these two parts, which in my opinion cannot be separated without enervating the force of both. The two parts are these, "That a right under-

^m 'Concordiâ res parvæ crescunt: discordiâ magnæ dilabuntur. Sallust. de Bell. Jug.

standing is the preservation, and discord the destruction of states.

Though then the poet has made use of two parts in his poems, each of which might have served for a fable, as we have observed, yet this multiplication cannot be called a vicious and irregular Polymythia, contrary to the necessary unity and simplicity of the fable; but it gives the fable another qualification, altogether necessary and regular, namely its perfection and finishing stroke.

SECT. V.

THE "action of a poem is the subject which the poet undertakes, proposes, and builds upon. So that the moral and the instructions which are the end of the epic poem are not the matter of it. Those the poets leave in their allegorical and figurative obscurity. They only give notice at the exordium, that they sing some action; the revenge of Achilles, the return of Ulysses, &c.

Since then the action is the matter of a fable, it is evident that whatever incidents are essential to the fable, or constitute a part of it, are necessary also to the action, and are parts of the epic matter, none of which ought to be omitted. Such, for instance, are the contention of Agamemnon and Achilles, the slaughter Hector makes in the Grecian army, the reunion of the Greek princes; and lastly, the resettlement

^a Of the action of the epic poem.

ment and victory which was the consequence of that reunion.

There are four qualifications in the epic action: the first is its unity, the second its integrity, the third its importance, the fourth its duration.

The unity of the epic action, as well as the unity of the fable, does not consist either in the unity of the hero, or in the unity of time: three things I suppose are necessary to it. The first is, to make use of no episode but what arises from the very platform and foundation of the action, and is as it were a natural member of the body. The second is, exactly to unite these episodes and these members with one another. And the third is, never to finish any episode so as it may seem to be an entire action; but to let each episode still appear in its own particular nature, as the member of a body, and as a part of itself not complete.

Aristotle^o not only says that the epic action should be one, but adds, that it should be entire, perfect, and complete; and for this purpose ought to have a beginning, a middle, and an end. These three parts of a whole are too generally and universally denoted by the words, beginning, middle, and end; we may interpret them more precisely, and say, that the causes and designs of an action are the beginning: that the effects of these causes, and the difficulties that are met with in the execution of these designs, are the middle; and that the unravelling and resolution of these difficulties are the end.

^o Of the beginning, middle, and end of the action.

Homer's^p design in the *Iliad* is to relate the anger and revenge of Achilles. The beginning of this action is the change of Achilles from a calm to a passionate temper. The middle is the effects of his passion, and all the illustrious deaths it is the cause of. The end of this same action is the return of Achilles to his calmness of temper again. All was quiet in the Grecian camp, when Agamemnon their general provokes Apollo against them, whom he was willing to appease afterwards at the cost and prejudice of Achilles, who had no part in his fault. This then is an exact beginning: it supposes nothing before, and requires after it the effects of this anger. Achilles revenges himself, and that is an exact middle; it supposes before it the anger of Achilles, this revenge is the effect of it. Then this middle requires after it the effects of this revenge, which is the satisfaction of Achilles: for the revenge had not been complete, unless Achilles had been satisfied. By this means the poet makes his hero, after he was glutted by the mischief he had done to Agamemnon, by the death of Hector, and the honour he did his friend, by insulting over his murderer; he makes him, I say, to be moved by the tears and misfortunes of king Priam. We see him as calm at the end of the poem, during the funeral of Hector, as he was at the beginning of the poem, whilst the plague raged among the Grecians. This end is just, since the calmness of temper Achilles reenjoyed, is only an effect of the revenge which ought to have preceded: and after this nobody expects any more of his anger.

^p The action of the *Iliad*.

Thus has Homer been very exact in the beginning, middle, and end of the action he made choice of for the subject of his *Iliad*.

His ¹design in the *Odyssey* was to describe the return of Ulysses from the siege of Troy, and his arrival at Ithaca. He opens this poem with the complaints of Minerva against Neptune, who opposed the return of this hero, and against Calypso, who detained him in an island from Ithaca. Is this a beginning? No; doubtless, the reader would know why Neptune is displeased with Ulysses, and how this prince came to be with Calypso? He would know how he came from Troy thither? The poet answers his demands out of the mouth of Ulysses himself, who relates these things, and begins the action by the recital of his travels from the city of Troy. It signifies little whether the beginning of the action be the beginning of the poem. The beginning of this action is that which happens to Ulysses, when upon his leaving Troy he bends his course for Ithaca. The middle comprehends all the misfortunes he endured, and all the disorders of his own government. The ²end is the reinstating of the hero in the peaceable possession of his kingdom, where he was acknowledged by his son, his wife, his father, and several others. The poet was sensible he should have ended ill, had he gone no farther than the death of these princes, who were the rivals and enemies of Ulysses, because the reader might have looked for some revenge which the subjects of these princes might have taken on him who had killed their sove-

¹ The action of the *Odyssey*.

reigns: but this danger over, and the people vanquished and quieted, there was nothing more to be expected. The poem and the action have all their parts, and no more.

But the order of the *Odyssey* differs from that of the *Iliad*, in that the poem does not begin with the beginning of the action.

The 'causes of the action are also what the poet is obliged to give an account of. There are three sorts of causes, the humours, the interests, and the designs of men; and these different causes of an action are likewise often the causes of one another, every man taking up those interests in which his humour engages him, and forming those designs to which his humour and interest incline him. Of all these the poet ought to inform his readers, and render them conspicuous in his principal personages.

Homer has ingeniously begun his *Odyssey* with the transactions at Ithaca, during the absence of Ulysses. If he had begun with the travels of his hero, he would scarce have spoken of any one else; and a man might have read a great deal of the poem, without conceiving the least idea of Telemachus, Penelope, or her suitors, who had so great a share in the action; but in the beginning he has pitched upon, besides these personages whom he discovers, he represents Ulysses in his full length; and from the very first opening one sees the interest which the gods take in the action.

* Of the causes and beginning of the action.

The skill and care of the same poet may be seen likewise in inducing his personages in the first book of his *Iliad*, where he discovers the humours, the interests, and the designs of Agamemnon, Achilles, Hector, Ulysses, and several others, and even of the deities. And in his second he makes a review of the Grecian and Trojan armies, which is full evidence, that all we have here said is very necessary.

As^a these causes are the beginning of the action, the opposite designs against that of the hero are the middle of it, and form that difficulty, or intrigue, which makes up the greatest part of the poem; the solution or unravelling commences when the reader begins to see that difficulty removed, and the doubts cleared up. Homer has divided each of his poems into two parts, and has put a particular intrigue, and the solution of it, into each part.

The first part of the *Iliad* is the anger of Achilles, who is for revenging himself upon Agamemnon by the means of Hector and the Trojans. The intrigue comprehends the three days fight which happened in the absence of Achilles: and it consists on one side in the resistance of Agamemnon and the Grecians: and on the other in the revengeful and inexorable humour of Achilles, which would not suffer him to be reconciled. The loss of the Grecians, and the despair of Agamemnon, prepare for a solution by the satisfaction which the incensed hero received from it. The death of Patroclus joined to the offers of Aga-

^a Of the middle or intrigue of the action.

memnon, which of itself had proved ineffectual, remove this difficulty, and make the unravelling of the first part.

This death is likewise the beginning of the second part; since it puts Achilles upon the design of revenging himself on Hector. But the design of Hector is opposite to that of Achilles: this Trojan is valiant, and resolved to stand on his own defence. This valour and resolution of Hector are on his part the cause of the intrigue. All the endeavours Achilles used to meet with Hector, and be the death of him; and the contrary endeavours of the Trojan to keep out of his reach, and defend himself, are the intrigue; which comprehends the battle of the last day. The unravelling begins at the death of Hector; and besides that, it contains the insulting of Achilles over his body, the honours he paid to Patroclus, and the intreaties of king Priam. The regrets of this king, and the other Trojans, in the sorrowful obsequies they paid to Hector's body, end the unravelling; they justify the satisfaction of Achilles, and demonstrate his tranquillity.

The first part of the *Odyssey* is the return of Ulysses into Ithaca. Neptune opposes it by raising tempests, and this makes the intrigue. The unravelling is the arrival of Ulysses upon his own island, where Neptune could offer him no farther injury. The second part is the reinstating this hero in his own government. The princes that are his rivals, oppose him, and this is a fresh intrigue: the solution of it

begins at their deaths, and is completed as soon as the Ithacans were appeased.

These two parts in the *Odyssey* have not one common intrigue. The anger of Achilles forms both the intrigues in the *Iliad*; and it is so far the matter of this epopea, that the very beginning and end of this poem depend on the beginning and end of this anger. But let the desire Achilles had to revenge himself, and the desire Ulysses had to return to his own country, be never so near allied, yet we cannot place them under one and the same notion; for that desire of Ulysses is not a passion that begins and ends in the poem with the action: it is a natural habit: nor does the poet propose it for his subject, as he does the anger of Achilles.

We have already observed what is meant by the intrigue, and the unravelling thereof; let us now say something of the manner of forming both. These two should arise naturally out of the very essence and subject of the poem, and are to be deduced from thence. Their conduct is so exact and natural, that it seems as if their action had presented them with whatever they inserted; without putting themselves to the trouble of a farther inquiry.

What is more usual and natural to warriors, than anger, heat, passion, and impatience of bearing the least affront or disrespect? This is what forms the intrigue of the *Iliad*; and every thing we read there is nothing else but the effect of this humour and these passions.

What more natural and usual obstacle to those who take voyages, than the sea, the winds, and the storms? Homer makes this the intrigue of the first part of the *Odyssey*: and for the second, he makes use of almost the infallible effect of the long absence of a master, whose return is quite despaired of, viz. the insolence of his servants and neighbours, the danger of his son and wife, and the sequestration of his estate. Besides, an absence of almost twenty years, and the insupportable fatigues joined to the age of which Ulysses then was, might induce him to believe that he should not be owned by those who thought him dead, and whose interest it was to have him really so. Therefore if he had presently declared who he was, and had called himself Ulysses, they would easily have destroyed him as an impostor, before he had an opportunity to make himself known.

There could be nothing more natural nor more necessary than this ingenious disguise, to which the advantages his enemies had taken of his absence had reduced him, and to which his long misfortunes had inured him. This allowed him an opportunity, without hazarding any thing, of taking the best measures he could, against those persons who could not so much as mistrust any harm from him. This way was afforded him, by the very nature of his action, to execute his designs, and overcome the obstacles it cast before him. And it is this contest between the prudence and the dissimulation of a single man on one hand, and the ungovernable insolence of so many

rivals on the other, which constitutes the intrigue of the second part of the *Odyssey*.

If 'the plot or intrigue must be natural, and such as springs from the very subject, as has been already urged, then the winding-up of the plot, by a more sure claim, must have this qualification, and be a probable consequence of all that went before. As this is what the readers regard more than the rest, so should the poet be more exact in it. This is the end of the poem, and the last impression that is to be stamped upon them.

We shall find this in the *Odyssey*. Ulysses by a tempest is cast upon the island of the Phæacians, to whom he discovers himself, and desires they would favour his return to his own country, which was not very far distant. One cannot see any reason why the king of this island should refuse such a reasonable request to a hero whom he seemed to have in great esteem. The Phæacians indeed had heard him tell the story of his adventures; and in this fabulous recital consisted all the advantage that he could derive from his presence; for the art of war which they admired in him, his undauntedness under dangers, his indefatigable patience, and other virtues, were such as these islanders were not used to. All their talent lay in singing and dancing, and whatsoever was charming in a quiet life. And here we see how dexterously Homer prepares the incidents he makes use of. These people could do no less, for the account with which

† Of the end or unravelling of the action.

Ulysses had so much entertained them, than afford him a ship and a safe convoy, which was of little expence or trouble to them.

When he arrived, his long absence, and the travels which had disfigured him, made him altogether unknown; and the danger he would have incurred, had he discovered himself too soon, forced him to a disguise: lastly, this disguise gave him an opportunity of surprising those young suitors, who for several years together had been accustomed to nothing but to sleep well, and fare daintily.

It was from these examples that Aristotle drew this rule, that 'Whatever concludes the poem should so spring from the very constitution of the fable, as if it were a necessary, or at least a probable consequence.'

SECT. VI.

THE^a time of the epic action is not fixed, like that of the dramatic poem: it is much longer; for an uninterrupted duration is much more necessary in an action which one sees and is present at, than in one which we only read or hear repeated. Besides tragedy is fuller of passion, and consequently of such a violence as cannot admit of so long a duration.

The Iliad containing an action of anger and violence, the poet allows it but a short time, about forty days. The design of the Odyssey required another conduct; the character of the hero is prudence and

^a The time of the action.

long-suffering; therefore the time of its duration is much longer, above eight years.

The ^w passions of tragedy are different from those of the epic poem. In the former, terror and pity have the chief place; the passion that seems most peculiar to epic poetry, is admiration.

Besides this admiration, which in general distinguishes the epic poem from the dramatic, each epic poem has likewise some peculiar passion, which distinguishes it in particular from other epic poems, and constitutes a kind of singular and individual difference between these poems of the same species. These singular passions correspond to the character of the hero. Anger and terror reign throughout the *Iliad*, because Achilles is angry, and the most terrible of all men. The *Æneid* has all the soft and tender passions, because that is the character of Æneas. The prudence, wisdom, and constancy, of Ulysses do not allow him either of these extremes, therefore the poet does not permit one of them to be predominant in the *Odyssey*. He confines himself to admiration only, which he carries to an higher pitch than in the *Iliad*; and it is upon this account that he introduces a great many more machines, in the *Odyssey*, into the body of the action, than are to be seen in the actions of the other two poems.

The ^x manners of the epic poem ought to be poetically good, but it is not necessary they be always morally so. They are poetically good, when one may

^w The passions of the epic poem.

^x The manners.

discover the virtue or vice, the good or ill inclinations, of every one who speaks or acts: they are poetically bad, when persons are made to speak or act out of character, or inconsistently or unequally. The manners of Æneas and of Mezentius are equally good, considered poetically, because they equally demonstrate the piety of the one, and the impiety of the other.

It¹ is requisite to make the same distinction between a hero in morality, and a hero in poetry, as between moral and poetical goodness. Achilles had as much right to the latter as Æneas. Aristotle says, that the hero of a poem should be neither good nor bad; neither advanced above the rest of mankind by his virtues, or sunk beneath them by his vices; that he may be the proper and fuller example to others, both what to imitate and what to decline.

The other qualifications of the manners are, that they be suitable to the causes which either raise or discover them in the persons; that they have an exact resemblance to what history, or fable, have delivered of those persons to whom they are ascribed; and that there be an equality in them, so that no man is made to act, or speak, out of his character.

But² this equality is not sufficient for the unity of the character; it is further necessary, that the same spirit appear in all sort of encounters. Thus Æneas acting with great piety and mildness in the first part of the Æneid, which requires no other character;

¹ Character of the hero.

² Unity of the character.

and afterwards appearing illustrious in heroic valour, in the wars of the second part; but there, without any appearance either of a hard or a soft disposition; would, doubtless, be far from offending against the equality of the manners: but yet there would be no simplicity or unity in the character. So that, besides the qualities that claim their particular place upon different occasions, there must be one appearing throughout, which commands over all the rest; and without this, we may affirm, it is no character.

One may indeed make a hero as valiant as Achilles, as pious as Æneas, and as prudent as Ulysses. But it is a meer chimæra to imagine a hero that has the valour of Achilles, the piety of Æneas, and the prudence of Ulysses, at one and the same time. This vision might happen to an author, who would suit the character of a hero to whatever each part of the action might naturally require, without regarding the essence of the fable, or the unity of the character in the same person upon all sorts of occasions: this hero would be the mildest, best-natured prince in the world, and also the most choleric of hard-hearted, and implacable creature imaginable; he would be extremely tender like Æneas, extremely violent like Achilles, and yet have the indifference of Ulysses, that is, incapable of the two extremes. Would it not be in vain for the poet to call this person by the same name throughout?

Let us reflect on the effects it would produce in several poems, whose authors were of opinion, that the chief character of a hero is that of an accomplished man. They would be all alike; all valiant in

battle, prudent in council, pious in the acts of religion, courteous, civil, magnificent; and, lastly, endowed with all the prodigious virtues any poet could invent. All this would be independent of the action and the subject of the poem; and, upon seeing each hero separated from the rest of the work, we should not easily guess, to what action, and to what poem, the hero belonged. So that we should see, that none of those would have a character, since the character is that which makes a person discernible, and which distinguishes him from all others.

This commanding quality in Achilles is his anger, in Ulysses the art of dissimulation, in Æneas meekness. Each of these may be stiled, by way of eminence, the character in these heroes.

But these characters cannot be alone. It is absolutely necessary that some other should give them a lustre, and embellish them as far as they are capable: either by hiding the defects that are in each, by some noble and shining qualities; as the poet has done the anger of Achilles, by shading it with extraordinary valour: or by making them entirely of the nature of a true and solid virtue, as is to be observed in the two others. The dissimulation of Ulysses is a part of his prudence; and the meekness of Æneas is wholly employed in submitting his will to the gods. For the making up this union our poets have joined together such qualities as are by nature the most compatible; valour with anger, meekness with piety, and prudence with dissimulation. This last union was necessary for the goodness of Ulysses; for without that, his diasi-

mulation might have degenerated into wickedness and double-dealing.

SECT. VII.

WE^a come now to the machines of the epic poem. The chief passion which it aims to excite being admiration, nothing is so conducive to that as the marvellous; and the importance and dignity of the action is by nothing so greatly elevated as by the care and interposition of heaven.

The machines are of three sorts. Some are theological, and were invented to explain the nature of the gods. Others are physical, and represent the things of nature. The last are moral, and are the images of virtues and vices.

Homer and the ancients have given to their deities the manners, passions, and vices of men. Their poems are wholly allegorical; and in this view it is easier to defend Homer, than to blame him. We cannot accuse him for making mention of many gods, for his bestowing passions upon them, or even introducing them fighting against men. The scripture uses the like figures and expressions.

If it be allowable to speak thus of the gods in theology, much more in the fictions of natural philosophy, where, if a poet describes the deities, he must give them such manners, speeches, and actions, as

^a Of the machinery.

are conformable to the nature of the things they represent under those divinities. The case is the same in the morals of the deities: Minerva is wise because she represents prudence; Venus is both good or bad, because the passion of love is capable of these contrary qualities.

Since among the gods of a poem some are good, some bad, and some indifferently either; and since of our passions we make so many allegorical deities; we may attribute to the gods all that is done in the poem, whether good or evil. But these deities do not act constantly in one and the same manner.

Sometimes they act invisibly, and by mere inspiration; which has nothing in it extraordinary or miraculous: being no more than what we say every day, 'That some god has assisted us, or some demon has instigated us.'

At other times they appear visibly, and manifest themselves to men, in a manner altogether miraculous and preternatural.

The third way has something of both the others; it is in truth a miracle, but is not commonly so accounted: this includes dreams, oracles, &c.

All these ways must be probable; for however necessary the marvellous is to the epic action, as nothing is so conducive to admiration; yet we can, on the other hand, admire nothing, that we think impossible. Though the probability of these machines be of a very large extent (since it is founded upon Divine Power), it is not without limitations. There are numerous instances of allowable and probable machines

in the epic poem, where the gods are no less actors than the men. But the less credible sort, such as metamorphoses, &c. are far more rare.

This suggests a reflection on the method of rendering those machines probable, which in their own nature are hardly so. Those, which require only divine probability, should be so disengaged from the action, that one might subtract them from it, without destroying the action. But those, which are essential and necessary, should be grounded upon human probability, and not on the sole power of God. Thus the episodes of Circe, the Syrens, Polyphemus, &c. are necessary to the action of the *Odyssey*, and yet not humanly probable: yet Homer has artificially reduced them to human probability, by the simplicity and ignorance of the Phæacians, before whom he causes those recitals to be made.

The next question is, Where, and on what occasions machines may be used? It is certain Homer and Virgil make use of them every where, and scarce suffer any action to be performed without them. Petronius makes this a precept: '*Per ambages, decorumque ministeria, &c.*' The gods are mentioned in the very proposition of their works, the invocation is addressed to them, and the whole narration is full of them. The gods are the causes of the action, they form the intrigue, and bring about the solution. The precept of Aristotle and Horace, that the unravelling of the plot should not proceed from a miracle, or the appearance of a god, has place only in dramatic poetry, not in the epic. For it is plain, that both in

the solution of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, the gods are concerned: in the former, the deities meet to appease the anger of Achilles: Iris and Mercury are sent to that purpose, and Minerva eminently assists Achilles in the decisive combat with Hector. In the *Odyssey*, the same goddess fights close by Ulysses against the suitors, and concludes that peace betwixt him and the Ithacensians which completes the poem.

We may therefore determine, that a machine is not an invention to extricate the poet out of any difficulty which embarrasses him: but that the presence of a divinity, and some action surprising and extraordinary, are inserted into almost all the parts of his work, in order to render it more majestic and more admirable. But this mixture ought to be so made, that the machines might be retrenched, without taking any thing from the action: at the same time that it gives the readers a lesson of piety and virtue; and teaches them, that the most brave and the most wise can do nothing, and attain nothing great and glorious, without the assistance of Heaven. Thus the machinery crowns the whole work, and renders it at once, marvellous, probable, and moral.

HOMER'S BATTLE
OF THE
FROGS AND MICE.

By Mr. Archdeacon PARNELL.

Corrected by Mr. POPP.

NAMES OF THE MICE.

PSYCARPAX, one who plunders granaries.

Troxartes, a bread-eater.

Lychomyte, a lick of meal.

Pternotroctas, a bacon-eater.

Lycopinax, a lick of dishes.

Embasichitros, a creeper into pots.

Lychenor, a name from licking.

Troglodytes, one who runs into holes.

Artophagus, who feeds on bread.

Tyroglyphus, a cheese scooper.

Pternophagus, a bacon-eater.

Cnissodictes, one who follows the steam of kitchens.

Sitophagus, an eater of wheat.

Meridarpax, one who plunders his share.

NAMES OF THE FROGS.

PHYSIGNATHUS, one who swells his cheeks.

Peleus, a name from mud.

Hydrameduse, a ruler in the waters.

Hypsilos, a loud bawler.

Pelion, from mud.

Scuticus, called from the beet.

Polyphonus, a great babbler.

Lymnocharis, one who loves the lake.

Cramtophagus, cabbage-eater.

Lymnisus, called from the lake.

Calaminthus, from the herb.

Hydrochuris, who loves the water.

Borboracates, who lies in the mud.

Prussophagus, an eater of garlic.

Pelusius, from mud.

Pelobates, who walks in the dirt.

Prassæus, called from garlic.

Craugasides, from croaking.

THE
BATTLE OF THE FROGS AND MICE.

BOOK I.

To fill my rising song with sacred fire,
Ye tuneful nine, ye sweet celestial quire!
From Helicon's imbow'ring height repair,
Attend my labours, and reward my pray'r.
The dreadful toils of raging Mars I write, 5
The springs of contest, and the fields of fight;
How threat'ning Mice advanc'd with warlike grace,
And wag'd dire combats with the croaking race.
Not louder tumults shook Olympus' tow'rs,
When earth-born giants dar'd immortal pow'rs. 10
These equal acts an equal glory claim,
And thus the muse records the tale of fame.

Once on a time, fatigu'd and out of breath,
And just escap'd the stretching claws of death,
A gentle Mouse, whom cats pursu'd in vain, 15
Flies swift-of-foot across the neighb'ring plain,
Hangs o'er a brink his eager thirst to cool,
And dips his whiskers in the standing pool;
When near a courteous Frog advanc'd his head,
And from the waters, hoarse resounding said, 20
What art thou, stranger? What the line you boast?
What chance hath cast thee panting on our coast?

With strictest truth let all thy words agree,
 Nor let me find a faithless Mouse in thee.
 If worthy friendship, proffer'd friendship take, 25
 'And ent'ring view the pleasurable lake:
 Range o'er my palace, in my bounty share,
 And glad return from hospitable fare.
 This silver realm extends beneath my sway,
 And me, their monarch, all its Frogs obey. 30
 Great Physignathus I, from Pelius' race,
 Begot in fair Hydromeduse' embrace,
 Where by the nuptial bank that paints his side,
 The swift Eridanus delights to glide.
 Thee too, thy form, thy strength, and port proclaim,
 A scepter'd king; a son of martial fame; 36
 Then trace thy line, and aid my guessing eyes.
 Thus ceas'd the Frog, and thus the Mouse replies.
 Known to the gods, the men, the birds that fly,
 Through wild expanses of the midway sky, 40
 My name resounds; and if unknown to thee,
 The soul of great Psycarpax lives in me,
 Of brave Troxartes' line, whose sleeky down
 In love compress'd Lycomile the brown:
 My mother she, and princess of the plains 45
 Where'er her father Pternotroctas reigns:
 Born where a cabin lifts its airy shed,
 With figs, with nuts, with vary'd dainties fed
 But since our natures nought in common know,
 From what foundation can a friendship grow? 50

These curling waters o'er thy palace roll;
But man's high food supports my princely soul.
In vain the circled loaves attempt to lie
Conceal'd in flasks from my curious eye;
In vain the tripe that boasts the whitest hue, 55
In vain the gilded bacon shuns my view,
In vain the cheeses, offspring of the pail,
Or honied cakes, which gods themselves regale.
And as in arts I shine, in arms I fight,
Mix'd with the bravest, and unknown to flight. 60
Though large to mine the human form appear,
Not man himself can smite my soul with fear:
Sly to the bed with silent steps I go,
Attempt his finger, or attack his toe,
And fix indented wounds with dext'rous skill, 65
Sleeping he feels, and only seems to feel.
Yet have we foes which direful dangers cause,
Grim owls with talons arm'd, and cats with claws;
And that false trap, the den of silent fate,
Where death his ambush plants around the bait,
All dreaded these, and dreadful o'er the rest 71
The potent warriors of the tabby vest;
If to the dark we fly, the dark they trace,
And rend our heroes of the nibbling race.
But me, nor stalks, nor wat'rish herbs delight, 75
Nor can the crimson radish charm my sight;
The lake-resounding Frogs selected fare,
Which not a Mouse of any taste can bear.

As thus the downy prince his mind express'd,
His answer thus the croaking king address'd. 80

Thy words luxuriant on thy dainties rove,
And, stranger, we can boast of bounteous Jove;
We sport in water, or we dance on land,
And born amphibious, food from both command.
But trust thyself where wonders ask thy view: 85
And safely tempt those seas, I'll bear thee through:
Ascend my shoulders, firmly keep thy seat,
And reach my marshy court, and feast in state.

He said, and lean'd his back; with nimble bound
Leaps the light Mouse, and clasps his arms around, 90
Then wond'ring floats, and sees with glad survey
The winding banks resembling ports at sea.
But when aloft the curling water rides,
And wets with azure wave his downy sides,
His thoughts grow conscious of approaching woe, 95
His idle tears with vain repentance flow,
His locks he rends, his trembling feet he rears,
Thick beats his heart with unaccustom'd fears;
He sighs, and chill'd with danger, longs for shore:
His tail extended forms a fruitless oar, 100
Half drench'd in liquid death his pray'rs he spake,
And thus bemoan'd him from the dreadful lake.

So pass'd Europa through the rapid sea,
Trembling and fainting all the vent'rous way;
With oary feet the bull triumphant rode,
And safe in Crete depos'd his lovely load.

Ah safe at last! may thus the Frog support
My trembling limbs to reach his ample court.

As thus he sorrows, death ambiguous grows,
Lo! from the deep a water-hydra rose; 110
He rolls his sanguin'd eyes, his bosom heaves;
And darts with active rage along the waves.
Confus'd, the monarch sees his hissing foe,
And dives to shun the sable fates below.
Forgetful Frog! the friend thy shoulders bore, 115
Unskill'd in swimming, floats remote from shore.
He grasps with fruitless hands to find relief,
Supinely falls, and grinds his teeth with grief;
Plunging he sinks, and struggling mounts again,
And sinks, and strives, but strives with fate in vain.
The weighty moisture clogs his hairy vest, 121
And thus the prince his dying rage exprest.

Nor thou, that flings me flound'ring from thy back,
As from hard rocks rebounds the shatt'ring wrack,
Nor thou shalt 'scape thy due, perfidious king! 125
Pursu'd by vengeance on the swiftest wing:
At land thy strength could never equal mine,
At sea to conquer, and by craft, was thine.
But heav'n has gods, and gods have searching eyes:
Ye Mice, ye Mice, my great avengers, rise! 130

This said, he sighing gasp'd, and gasping died;
His death the young Lycophinax espied,
As on the flow'ry brink he pass'd the day, •
Bask'd in the beam, and loiter'd life away :

Loud shrieks the Mouse, his shrieks the shores repeat;
 The nibbling nation learn their hero's fate:
 Grief, dismal grief ensues; deep murmurs sound,
 And shriller fury fills the deafen'd ground;
 From lodge to lodge the sacred heralds run,
 To fix their council with the rising sun; 140
 Where great Troxartes crown'd in glory reigns,
 And winds his length'ning court beneath the plains:
 Psycarpax' father, father now no more!
 For poor Psycarpax lies remote from shore:
 Supine he lies! the silent waters stand, 145
 And no kind billow wafts the dead to land!

BOOK II.

WHEN rosy-finger'd morn had ting'd the clouds,
 Around their Monarch-Mouse the nation crowds;
 Slow rose the monarch, heav'd his anxious breast,
 And thus, the council fill'd with rage, address.

For lost Psycarpax much my soul endures, 5
 'Tis mine the private grief, the public, yours;
 Three warlike sons adorn'd my nuptial bed,
 Three sons, alas, before their father dead!
 Our eldest perish'd by the rav'ning cat,
 As near my court the prince unheedful sat. 10
 Our next, an engine fraught with danger drew,
 The portal gap'd, the bait was hung in view,

Dire arts assist the trap, the fates decoy,
And men unpitying kill'd my gallant boy.
The last, his country's hope, his parents pride, 15
Plung'd in the lake by Physignathus, died.
Rouse all the war, my friends! avenge the deed,
And bleed that monarch, and his nation bleed.

His words in ev'ry breast inspir'd alarms,
And careful Mars supplied their host with arms. 20
In verdant hulls despoil'd of all their beans,
The buskin'd warriors stalk'd along the plains:
Quills aptly bound, their bracing corselet made,
Fac'd with the plunder of a cat they slay'd,
The lamp's round boss affords their ample shield, 25
Large shells of nuts their covering helmet yield;
And o'er the region, with reflected rays,
Tall groves of needles for their lances blaze.
Dreadful in arms the marching Mice appear:
The wond'ring Frogs perceive the tumult near, 30
Forsake the waters, thick'ning form a ring,
And ask, and hearken, whence the noises spring;
When near the crowd, disclos'd to public view,
The valiant chief Embasichytros drew:
The sacred herald's sceptre grac'd his hand, 35
And thus his words express'd his king's command.
Ye Frogs! the Mice, with vengeance fir'd, advance,
And deck'd in armour shake the shining lance;
Their hapless prince by Physignathus slain,
Extends incumbent on the wat'ry plain. 40

Then arm your host, the doubtful battle try;
Lead forth those Frogs that have the soul to die.

The chief retires, the crowd the challenge hear,
And proudly swelling, yet perplex'd appear;
Much they resent, yet much their monarch blame, 45
Who rising, spoke to clear his tainted fame.

O friends! I never forc'd the Mouse to death, .
Nor saw the gaspings of his latest breath.
He, vain of youth, our art of swimming tried,
And vent'rous in the lake the wanton died. 50
To vengeance now by false appearance led,
They point their anger at my guiltless head.
But wage the rising war by deep device,
And turn its fury on the crafty Mice.
Your king directs the way; my thoughts elate 55
With hopes of conquest, form designs of fate.
Where high the banks their verdant surface heave,
And the steep sides confine the sleeping wave,
There, near the margin, and in armour bright, .
Sustain the first impetuous shocks of fight: 60
Then where the dancing feather joins the crest,
Let each brave Frog his obvious Mouse arrest;
Each strongly grasping, headlong plunge a foe,
Till countless circles whirl the lake below; .
Down sink the Mice in yielding waters drown'd; 65
Loud flash the waters; echoing shores resound:
The Frogs triumphant tread the conquer'd plain,
And raise their glorious trophies of the slain.

He spake no more, his prudent scheme imparts
Redoubling ardour to the boldest hearts. 70

Green was the suit his arming heroes chose,
Around their legs the greaves of mallows close,
Green were the beets about their shoulders laid,
And green the colewort, which the target made,
Form'd of the varied shells the waters yield, 75
Their* glossy helmets glisten'd o'er the field;
And tap'ring sea-reeds for the polish'd spear,
With upright order pierc'd the ambient air.
Thus dress'd for war, they take th' appointed height,
Poise the long arms, and urge the promis'd fight. 80

But now, where Jove's irradiate spires arise,
With stars surrounded in ethereal skies,
(A solemn council call'd) the brazen gates
Unbar; the gods assume their golden seats:
The sire superior leans, and points to show 85
What wond'rous combats mortals wage below:
How strong, how large, the num'rous heroes stride;
What length of lance they shake with warlike pride:
What eager fire their rapid march reveals;
So the fierce Centaurs ravag'd o'er the dales; 90
And so confirm'd, the* daring Titans rose,
Heap'd hills on hills, and bid the gods be foes.

This seen, the Pow'r his sacred visage rears,
He casts a pitying smile on worldly cares,
And asks what heav'nly guardians take the list, 95
Or who the Mice, or who the Frogs assist!

Then thus to Pallas. If my daughter's mind
Have join'd the Mice, why stays she still behind?
Drawn forth by sav'ry streams they wind their way,
And sure attendance round thine altar pay, • 100
Where while the victims gratify their taste,
They sport to please the goddess of the feast.

Thus spake the ruler of the spacious skies,
When thus, resolv'd, the blue-ey'd maid replies.
In vain, my father! all their dangers plead; 105
To such, thy Pallas never grants her aid.
My flow'ry wreaths they petulantly spoil,
And rob my crystal lamps of feeding oil:
(Ills following ill) but what afflicts me more,
My veil, that idle race profanely tore. 110
The web was curious, wrought with art divine;
Relentless wretches! all the work was mine:
Along the loom the purple warp I spread,
Cast the light shoot, and cross'd the silver thread.
In this their teeth a thousand breaches tear; 115
The thousand breaches skilful hands repair;
For which, vile earthly duns thy daughter grieve:
But gods, that use no coin, have none to give;
And learning's goddess never less can owe;
Neglected learning gets no wealth below. 120
Nor let the Frogs to gain my succour sue,
Those clam'rous fools have lost my favour too.
For late, when 'all the conflict ceas'd at night,
When my stretch'd sinews ach'd with eager fight,

When spent with glorious toil, I left the field, 125
And sunk for slumber on my swelling shield;
Lo from the deep, repelling sweet repose,
With noisy croakings half the nation rose:
Devoid of rest, with aching brows I lay,
Till cocks proclaim'd the crimson dawn of day. 130
Let all, like me, from either host forbear,
Nor tempt the flying furies of the spear.
Let heav'nly blood (or what for blood may flow)
Adorn the conquest of a meaner foe,
Who, wildly rushing, meet the wondrous odds, 135
Though gods oppose; and brave the wounded gods.
O'er gilded clouds reclin'd, the danger view,
And be the wars of mortal scenes for you.
So mov'd the blue-ey'd queen; her words persuade;
Great Jove assented, and the rest obey'd. 140

BOOK III.

Now front to front the marching armies shine,
Halt ere they meet, and form the length'ning line;
The chiefs conspicuous seen, and heard afar,
Give the loud sign to loose the rushing war;
Their dreadful trumpets deep-mouth'd hornets sound,
The sounded charge remurmurs o'er the ground; 6
Ev'n Jove proclaims a field of horror nigh,
And rolls low thunder through the troubled sky.

BATTLE OF THE

First to the fight the large Hypsihoas flew,
 And brave Lychenor with a jav'lin slew; 10
 The luckless warrior, fill'd with gen'rous flame,
 Stood foremost glitt'ring in the post of fame.
 When in his liver struck, the jav'lin hung;
 The Mouse fell thund'ring, and the target rung:
 Prone to the ground he sinks his closing eye, 15
 And, soil'd in dust, his lovely tresses lie.
 A spear at Pelion Troglodytes cast;
 The missive spear within the bosom past;
 Death's sable shades the fainting Frog surround,
 And life's red tide runs ebbing from the wound. 20
 Embasiachytros felt Scutlaeus' dart
 Transfix, and quiver in his panting heart;
 But great Artophagus aveng'd the slain,
 And big Scutlaeus tumbling loads the plain:
 And Polyphonus dies, a Frog renown'd 25
 For boastful speech and turbulence of sound;
 Deep through the belly pierc'd, supine he lay,
 And breath'd his soul against the face of day.
 The strong Lymnocharis, who view'd with ire
 A victor triumph, and a friend expire, 30
 With heaving arms a rocky fragment caught,
 And fiercely flung where Troglodytes fought,
 A warrior vers'd in arts, of sure retreat,
 Yet arts in vain elude impending fate;
 - ~~And~~ on his sinewy neck the fragment fell, 35
 And over his eyelids clouds eternal dwell.

Lychenor (second of the glorious name)
Striding advanc'd, and took no wand'ring aim;
Through all the Frog the shining jav'lin flies,
And near the vanquish'd Mouse the victor dies. 40
The dreadful stroke Crambophagus affrights,
Long bred to banquets, less inur'd to fights;
Heedless he runs, and stumbles o'er the steep,
And wildly flound'ring flashes up the deep:
Lychenor, following, with a downward blow 45
Reach'd, in the lake, his unrecover'd foe;
Gasping he rolls, a purple stream of blood
Distains the surface of the silver flood;
Through the wide wound the rushing entrails throng,
And slow the breathless carcase floats along. 50
Lymnisius good Tyroglyphus assails,
Prince of the Mice that haunt the flow'ry vales,
Lost to the milky fares and rural seat,
He came, to perish on the bank of *ty te*.
The dread Pternoglyphus demands the fight, 55
Which tender Calaminthus shuns by flight,
Drops the green target, springing quits the foe,
Glides through the lake, and safely dives below.
The dire Pternophagus divides his way
Through breaking ranks, and leads the dreadful day;
No nibbling prince excell'd in fierceness more, 61
His parents fed him on the savage boar:
But where his lance the field with blood imbru'd,
Swift as he mov'd Hydrocharis pursu'd,

Till fall'n in death he lies; a shatt'ring stone 63
 Sounds on the neck, and crushes all the bone;
 His blood pollutes the verdure of the plain,
 And from his nostrils bursts the gushing brain.
 Lycopinax with Borboætes fights,
 A blameless Frog, whom humbler life delights; 70
 The fatal jav'lin unrelenting flies,
 And darkness seals the gentle croaker's eyes.
 Incens'd Piassophagus, with sprightly bound,
 Bears Chissodioetes off the rising ground;
 Then drags him o'er the lake, depriv'd of breath; 75
 And, downward plunging, sinks his soul to death.
 But now the great Psycarpax shines afar,
 (Scarce he so great whose loss provok'd the war)
 Swift to revenge his fatal jav'lin fled,
 And through the liver struck Pelusius dead; 80
 His freckled corpse before the victor fell,
 His soul indignant sought the shades of hell.
 This saw Pelobates, and from the flood
 Lifts with both hands a monstrous mass of mud.
 The cloud obscene o'er all the warrior flies, 85
 Dishonours his brown face, and blots his eyes.
 Enrag'd, and wildly sputt'ring, from the shore
 A stone immense of size the warrior bore;
 A load for lab'ring earth, whose bulk to raise,
 Asks ten degen'rate Mice of modern days: 90
 Full to the leg arrives the crushing wound;
 The Frog supportless, writhes upon the ground.

Thus flush'd, the victor wars with matchless force,
Till loud Craugasides arrests his course:
Hoarse croaking threats precede; with fatal speed 95
Deep through the belly runs the pointed reed,
Then, strongly tugg'd, return'd imbru'd with gore,
And on the pile his reeking entrails bore.
The lame Sitophagus, oppress'd with pain,
Creeps from the desp'rate dangers of the plain; 100
And where the ditches rising weeds supply,
To spread their lowly shades beneath the sky,
There lurks the silent Mouse reliev'd of heat,
And, safe imbower'd, avoids the chance of fate.
But here Troxartes, Physignathus there, 105
Whirl the dire furies of the pointed spear:
Then where the foot around its ancle plies,
Troxartes wounds, and Physignathus flies,
Halts to the pool, a safe retreat to find,
And trails a dangling length of leg behind. 110
The Mouse still urges, still the Frog retires,
And half in anguish of the flight expires;
Then pious ardour young Prassæus brings,
Betwixt the fortune of contending kings:
Lank, harmless Frog! with forces hardly grown, 115
He darts the reed in combats not his own,
Which faintly tinkling on Troxartes' shield,
Hangs at the point, and drops upon the field.
Now nobly tow'ring o'er the rest appears
A gallant prince that far transcends his years, 120

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A gallant prince that far transcends his years, 120

Pride of his sire, and glory of his house,
 And more a Mars in combat than a Mouse :
 His action bold, robust his ample frame,
 And Meridarpax his resounding name.
 The warrior, singled from the fighting crowd, 125
 Boasts the dire honours of his arms aloud;
 Then strutting near the lake, with looks elate,
 Threats all its nations with approaching fate.
 And such his strength, the silver lakes around,
 Might roll their waters o'er unpeopled ground. 130
 But powerful Jove, who shews no less his grace
 To Frogs that perish, than to human race,
 Felt soft compassion rising in his soul,
 And shook his sacred head, that shook the pole.
 Then thus to all the gazing pow'rs began 135
 The sire of gods, and frogs, and mouse, and man :
 What seas of blood I view, what worlds of slain?
 An Iliad rising from a day's campaign!
 How fierce his jav'lin, o'er the trembling lakes,
 The black-furr'd hero, Meridarpax, shakes!
 Unless some fav'ring deity descend,
 Soon will the Frogs' loquacious empire end,
 Let dreadful Pallas, wing'd with pity, fly,
 And make her ægis blaze before his eye;
 While Mars, refulgent on his rattling car, 145
 Arrests his raging rival of the war.
 He ceas'd, reclining with attentive head,
 When thus the glorious god of combats said:

Nor Pallas, Jove! though Pallas take the field,
With all the terrors of her hissing shield; 150
Nor Mars himself, though Mars in armour bright
Ascend his car, and wheel amidst the fight;
Not these can drive the desp'rate Mouse afar,
And change the fortunes of the bleeding war.
Let all go forth, all heav'n in arms arise; 155
Or launch thy own red thunder from the skies:
Such ardent bolts as flew that wond'rous day
When heaps of Titans mix'd with mountains lay;
When all the giant-race enormous fell;
And huge Enceladus was hurl'd to hell. 160

'Twas thus th' armipotent advis'd the gods,
When from his throne the cloud-compeller nods;
Deep length'ning thunders run from pole to pole,
Olympus trembles as the thunders roll.
Then swift he whirls the brandish'd bolt around, 165
And headlong darts it at the distant ground;
The bolt, discharg'd, inwrap'd with lightning flies,
And rends its flaming passage through the skies:
Then earth's inhabitants, the nibblers, shake;
And Frogs, the dwellers in the waters, quake; 170
Yet still the Mice advance their dread design,
And the last danger threats the croaking line;
Till Jove, that inly mourn'd the loss they bore,
With strange assistance fill'd the frightened shore.

Pour'd from the neighb'ring strand, deform'd to view,
They march, a sudden unexpected crew. 176

Strong suits of armour round their bodies close,
Which like thick anvils blunt the force of blows;
In wheeling marches turn'd, oblique they go;
With harpy claws their limbs divide below; 180
Fell sheers the passage to their mouth command;
From out the flesh the bones by nature stand:
Broad spread their backs their shining shoulders rise,
Unnumber'd joints distort their lengthen'd thighs,
With nervous cords their hands are firmly brac'd, 185
Their round black eye-balls in their bosom plac'd,
On eight long feet the wond'rous warriors tread,
And either end alike supplies a head.

These to call crabs, mere mortal wits agree;
But gods have other names for things than we. 190

Now, where the jointures from their loins depend,
The heroes tails with sev'ring grasps they rend.
Here, short of feet, depriv'd the pow'r to fly;
There, without hands, upon the field they lie.
Wrench'd from their holds, and scatter'd all around,
The bended lances heap the cumber'd ground. 196
Helpless amazement, fear pursuing fear,
And mad confusion through their host appear;
O'er the wild waste with headlong flight they go,
Or creep conceal'd in vaulted holes below. 200

But down Olympus, to the western seas,
Far-shooting Phœbus drove with fainter rays;
And a whole war (so Jove ordain'd) begun,
Was fought, and ceas'd, in one revolving sun.

THE
FIRST BOOK
OF THE
ODYSSEY.

THE ARGUMENT.

MINERVA'S DESCENT TO ITHACA.

THE poem opens within forty-eight days of the arrival of Ulysses in his dominions. He had now remained seven years in the island of Calypso, when the gods assembled in council proposed the method of his departure from thence, and his return to his native country. For this purpose it is concluded to send Mercury to Calypso, and Pallas immediately descends to Ithaca. She holds a conference with Telemachus, in the shape of Menetes king of the Taphians; in which she advises him to take a journey, in quest of his father Ulysses, to Pylos and Sparta, where Nestor and Menelaus yet reigned; then, after having visibly displayed her divinity, disappears. The suitors of Penelope make great entertainments, and riot in her palace till night. Phemius sings to them the return of the Grecians, till Penelope puts a stop to the song. Some words arise between the suitors and Telemachus, who summons the council to meet the day following.

THE
ODYSSEY.

BOOK I.

THE man, for wisdom's various arts renown'd,
Long exercis'd in woes, oh muse! resound;
Who, when his arms had wrought the destin'd fall
Of sacred Troy, and raz'd her heav'n-built wall,

NOTES.

We shall proceed in the same method through the course of these annotations upon the *Odyssey*, as those in the *Iliad*; considering Homer chiefly as a poet, endeavouring to make his beauties understood, and not to praise without a reason given. It is equally an extreme, on the one hand to think Homer has no human defects; and on the other to dwell so much upon those defects as to depreciate his beauties. The greater part of critics form a general character, from the observation of particular errors, taken in their own oblique or imperfect views; which is as unjust, as to make a judgment of the beauty of a man's body from the shadow it happens to cast, in such or such a position. To convince the reader of this intended impartiality, we readily allow the *Odyssey* to be inferior to the *Iliad* in many respects. It has not that sublimity of spirit, or that enthusiasm of poetry; but then it must be allowed, if it be less noble, it is more instructive: the other abounds with more heroism, this with more morality. The *Iliad* gives us a draught of gods and heroes, of dis-

Wand'ring from clime to clime, observant stray'd, 5
 Their manners noted, and their states survey'd.

cord, of contentions, and scenes of slaughter; the *Odyssey* sets before us a scene more amiable, the landscapes of nature; the pleasures of private life, the duties of every station, the hospitality of ancient times; a less busy, but more agreeable portrait. The *Iliad* concludes with the ruin, the *Odyssey* with the happiness of a nation. Horace was of the same opinion, as is evident from the epistle to Lollius.

‘Seditione, dolis, scelere, atque libidine, et ira,
 Iliacos intra muros peccatur et extra,
 Rursus, quid virtus et quid sapientia possit,
 Utile proposuit nobis exemplar Ulyssem.’

v. 1. *The man for wisdom, &c.*] Homer opens this poem with the utmost simplicity and modesty; he continually grows upon the reader,

‘Non fumum ex fulgore, sed ex fumo dare lucem
 Cogitat, ut speciosa dehinc miracula promat.’

Cicero lays this down as a rule for the orator, ‘Principia verecunda, non clatis intensa verbis;’ and Horace for the poet, ‘Nec sic incipies, &c.’ He proposes the beginning of the *Odyssey* as a pattern for all future poems, and has translated them in his *Art of Poetry*.

‘Dic mihi, musa, virum, captæ post tempora Trojæ,
 Qui mores hominum multorum vidit, et urbes.’

May I be forgiven the arrogance, if I should offer a criticism upon this translation: the sufferings of Ulysses are the subject of the whole *Odyssey*, and yet Horace has omitted the mention of those sufferings: *ος μαλα πολλα παλγχιθη*. There is another word also which seems essential, that is, *πολυτροπον*, this is likewise omitted. For the sufferings of Ulysses, and the wisdom by which he extricated himself from them, enter into the very design of the poem. But, indeed, in another place he has plainly had regard to all these circumstances.

‘Qui domitor Trojæ, multorum providus urbes
 Et mores hominum inspexit, latumque per æquor
 Dum sibi, dum sociis, reditum parat, aspera multa
 Pertulit’ —

EPIST. ad LOLL.

On stormy seas unnumber'd toils he bore,
Safe with his friends to gain his natal shore:

I must also refute a criticism of Rapin, who will have it that the word *πολυτροπος* includes a character of craft and low cunning, unworthy of a brave spirit. But Eustathius admirably vindicates the poet in this respect; he shews us that *τροπος* no where in Homer signifies (*ηθης*) or morals; and that it implies a man who could accommodate himself to every condition of life; one who in the worst estate had still a reserve to free himself from it; it therefore, says he, signifies a man that through experience has learned wisdom. I have likewise the authority of Horace for this sense, in the above-cited passage,

' Qui domitor Troje, multorum providus urbes.'

I take *providus* in this place to signify not only a man who noted the manners of various nations with care, but also one who in calamity could foresee methods to extricate himself from it. And surely nothing can be more unjust than what Rapin objects against Ulysses, in employing his wisdom only in his own preservation, while all his companions were lost: Homer himself sufficiently refutes this objection, and directly tells us, that he employed his wisdom in the care of their safety, but that they through their folly defeated his wisdom. The words of Homer, says Eustathius, shew that a wise man neglects not his friends in adversity. But, says Rapin, what could oblige Homer to begin with so dishonourable an action, and place the greatest weakness of his hero in the very frontispiece of his poem? and invoke his muse to sing the man who with difficulty saved himself, and suffered his companions to be destroyed? There had been some weight in this objection, if Ulysses had saved his own, with the loss of their lives; but I cannot see any dishonour in his preserving himself by wisdom, when they destroyed themselves by folly: it was chiefly by storms that they perished; it can be no imputation to his character, not to be able to restrain the effects of a tempest: he did all that a wise man could do, he gave them such admonitions upon every emergency, that if they had pursued them, they had been preserved as well as Ulysses.

V. 1. *For wisdom's various arts renown'd.*] BOSSU'S observations in relation to this epithet *πολυτροπος*, given to Ulysses, is worth tran-

Vain toils! their impious folly dar'd to prey

On herds devoted to the god of day; 10

scribing. The fable of the *Odyssey* (says he) is wholly for the conduct and policy of a state: therefore the quality it requires is wisdom; but this virtue is of too large an extent for the simplicity which a just and precise character requires; it is therefore requisite it should be limited. The great art of kings is the mystery of dissimulation. it is well known, that Lewis the Eleventh, for the instruction of his son, reduced all the Latin language to these words only, viz. 'Qui nescit dissimulare nescit regnare.' It was likewise by this practice that Saul began his reign, when he was first elected, and as yet full of the Spirit of God. The first thing we read of him in holy writ is, that * he made as if he did not hear the words which seditious people spoke against him.

This then is the character which the Greek poet gives his Ulysses in the proposition of his poem, he calls him *ἀνδρῶν πολλοτρόπος*; to denote this prudent dissimulation, which disguised him so many ways, and put him upon taking so many shapes.

Without any thing having been mentioned of Circe, who detained him with her a whole year, and who was famous for the transformations she made of all sorts of persons, the reader finds him at first with Calypso the daughter of wise Atlas, who bore up the vast pillars that reached from earth to heaven, and whose knowledge penetrated into the depths of the unfathomable ocean: that is to say, who was ignorant of nothing in heaven, earth, or sea. And as the first product and principal part of so high, so solid, and so profound a knowledge, was to know how to conceal one's self; this wise man called his daughter by a name that signified a † secret. The poet makes his hero; whom he designed for a politician, to stay seven whole years with this nymph. She taught him so well, that afterwards he lost no opportunity of putting her lessons in practice: for he does nothing without a disguise. At his parting from Ogygia he is cast upon the Isle of Phæacia: as kind as his reception was, yet he stays till the night before he went off, ere he would discover himself. From thence he goes to Ithaca: the first adventure that happened to

* *Ille vixit dissimulabat se audire.* RRG. lib. 1.

† *Καλυπτεται.*

The god vindictive doom'd them never more
(Ah men unblest'd!) to touch that natal shore.

him there was with Minerva, the most prudent among the deities, as Ulysses was the most prudent among men. She says so expressly in that very passage. Nor did they fail to disguise themselves. Minerva takes upon her the shape of a shepherd, and Ulysses tells her he was obliged to fly from Crete, because he had murdered the son of king Idomeneus. The goddess discovers herself first, and commends him particularly, because these artifices were so easy and natural to him, that they seemed to be born with him. Afterwards the hero under the form of a beggar deceives first of all Eumæus, then his son, and last of all his wife and every body else, till he found an opportunity of punishing his enemies, to whom he discovered not himself till he killed them, namely, on the last night. After his discovering himself in the palace, he goes the next day to deceive his father, appearing at first under a borrowed name; before he would give him joy of his return. Thus he takes upon him all manner of shapes, and dissembles to the very last. But the poet joins to this character a valour and a constancy which render him invincible in the most daring and desperate adventures.

V. 3. *Who, when his arms had wrought the destin'd fall
Of sacred Troy ———]*

Whence is it that Ulysses is said to have overthrown Troy? and not Achilles, who was of more remarkable courage than Ulysses? Eustathius tells us, that the destruction of Troy ought to be ascribed chiefly to Ulysses, as he not only took away the Palladium, but was the inventor of the stratagem of the wooden horse, by which that city was conquered. Virgil, in his second book of the *Æneid*, gives us a noble description of its destruction, by which we find that Ulysses was not only the contriver of its ruin, but bore a great share in the actions of the night in which that city was overturned.

v. 9. *Vain toils! their insipious folly, &c.]* By this single trait Homer marks an essential difference between the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*; namely, that in the former poem the people perished by the folly of their kings:

‘Quicquid delirant reges, plectuntur Achivi.’

Oh snatch some portion of these acts from fate,
Celestial muse! and to our world relate.

Now at their native realms the Greeks arriv'd; 15
All who the wars of ten long years surviv'd,

In this, the people perish by their own folly, while their prince omits nothing to procure their felicity. A plain reason why the *Odyssey* is more calculated for the people, than the *Iliad*. Dacier.

V. 13. *Oh snatch some portion of these acts from fate.*] It may be asked why the poet invokes the muse to recount only part of the sufferings of Ulysses? and why those words, 'To us also,' are inserted? To the first it may be answered, that an heroic poem dwells chiefly upon incidents of importance, and passes over every thing that does not contribute to raise our idea of the hero, or the main design of the poem. To the other Eustathius answers several ways: either, says he, the word *καὶ* is to be taken as an expletive, as it is in a thousand places in Homer; or it means that this is a subject so considerable, that it will be a theme to many poets: or that being a true history it had spread over many nations of the world, and that Homer himself received the story of the poem from Egypt; and then the meaning will be, 'Sing, oh muse, to the Greeks as well as to other nations, the sufferings of Ulysses.' I should prefer the first as being the most natural: the rest seem forced, and consequently improper for the opening of a poem, where the utmost plainness is necessary; especially, if we consider that Ulysses was a Grecian, and it is not probable that the Grecians should be the least acquainted with the story, or the latest to celebrate the actions, of a Grecian.

v. 15. *Now at their native realms the Greeks arriv'd.*] It is necessary for the better understanding of the poem, to fix the period of time from which it takes its beginning: Homer, as Eustathius observes, does not begin with the wanderings of Ulysses; he steps at once into the latter end of his actions, and leaves the preceding story to be told by way of narration. Thus in his *Iliad*, he dates his poem from the anger of Achilles, which happened almost at the conclusion of the Trojan war. From hence Horace drew his observation in his *Arte Poëtica*.

And scap'd the perils of the gulfy main.
 Ulysses, sole of all the victor train,
 An exile from his dear paternal coast,
 Deplor'd his absent queen, and empire lost. 20
 Calypso in her caves constrain'd his stay
 With sweet, reluctant, amorous delay:
 In vain—for now the circling years disclose
 The day predestin'd to reward his woes.
 At length his Ithaca is giv'n by fate, 25
 Where yet new labours his arrival wait;

' Semper ad eventum festinat: et in medias res
 Non secus ac notas, auditorem rapit.'

There are but forty-eight days from the departure of Ulysses from Calypso, to his discovery in Ithaca; he had been one year with Circe, and seven with Calypso, when the gods dispatched Mercury to that goddess; from which point of time we are to date the *Odyssey*.

This observation gives a reason why the poet invokes the muse to recount the wanderings of this hero in part only; for Ulysses, as appears from the beginning of the ninth book, after he left the shores of Troy, was driven to Ismarus of the Ciconians. An historian must have begun from the fall of Troy, and related his wanderings with truth and order; for history is chiefly for instruction: but a poet takes another method, and disposes every circumstance arbitrarily; he chooses or rejects, as suits best with his principal design, and in such a manner as to give at once delight and instruction.

V. 21. *Calypso in her caves constrain'd his stay.*] To the remark before cited of Bossu, upon the abode of Ulysses with Calypso, may be added this of the abbé Fraguier: that his residing seven years in the caves of Calypso (the goddess of secrecy) may only mean that he remained so long hid from the knowledge and inquiry of all men; or that whatever befel him in all that time, was lost to history, or made no part in the poem.

At length their rage the hostile pow'rs restrain,
 All but the ruthless monarch of the main.
 But now the god, remote, a heav'nly guest,
 In Ethiopia grac'd the genial feast, 30
 (A race divided, whom with sloping rays
 The rising and descending sun surveys)

V. 28. *All but the ruthless monarch of the main.*] It may be asked why Neptune is thus enraged against Ulysses? Homer himself tells us, because that hero had put out the eye of his son Cyclops. But if we take Neptune by way of allegory for the ocean, the passage implies, that the sufferings of Ulysses were chiefly by sea; and therefore poetry, which adds a grandeur to the meanest circumstance, introduces the god of it as his greatest enemy. EUSTATHIUS.

V. 30. *In Ethiopia, &c.*] Strabo in his first book delivers his opinion, that 'the ancient Grecians included all those people who lived upon the southern ocean, from east to west, in the general name of Ethiopians, and that it was not confined to those only who lay south of Egypt.' Ptolemy says, 'that under the zodiac, from east to west, inhabit the Ethiopians, black of colour.' And elsewhere the same geographer divides Ethiopia into the eastern and the western. These eastern and western Ethiopians were separated by the Arabian or Egyptian gulf; which though never mentioned by Homer, as Aristarchus remarked, yet it is not probable (says Strabo) that he should be ignorant of it, it being but a thousand stadia distant from the Mediterranean, when he knew the Egyptian Thebes, which was four times as far off. STRAB. PLIN. SPONDAN.

I will not repeat what was observed upon the gods being gone to the Ethiopians, in the first book of the Iliad; it is sufficient in general to observe, that the Ethiopians were a people very religious towards the gods, and that they held a pompous feast twelve days annually to their honour; and in particular, that the poet very judiciously makes use of this solemnity to remove Neptune out of the way, who was the enemy of Ulysses, that he may with the greater security bring off his hero from Calypso's Island. EUSTATHIUS.

There on the world's extremest verge, rever'd
 With hecatombs and pray'r in pomp prefer'd,
 Distant he lay: while in the bright abodes 35
 Of high Olympus, Jove conven'd the gods:
 Th' assembly thus the sire supreme addrest,
 Egysthus' fate revolving in his breast,
 Whom young Orestes to the dreary coast
 Of Pluto sent, a blood-polluted ghost. 40

Perverse mankind! whose wills, created free,
 Charge all their woes on absolute decree;
 All to the dooming gods their guilt translate,
 And follies are miscall'd the crimes of fate.
 When to his lust Egysthus gave the rein,
 Did fate, or we, th' adult'rous act constrain?

V. 41. *Jupiter's speech.*] The solemnity and sententiousness of this speech is taken notice of by Eustathius; and surely poetry must be highly valuable, when it delivers such excellent instructions. It contained the whole of religion among the ancients; and made philosophy more agreeable. This passage is an instance of it, a passage worthy of a Christian; it shows us that the Supreme being is sovereignly good; that he rewards the just, and punishes the unjust; and that the folly of man, and not the decree of heaven, is the cause of human calamity.

V. 45. *Egysthus*] It is difficult to find a reason why, in the original, Jupiter should give such an honourable appellation to Egysthus, as ἀμύμων, unblamable, who had dishonoured the bed of Agamemnon, and taken his life away; especially in that very instant when he condemns the fact with so great solemnity: Eustathius says, that Homer, an enemy to censure and invective, introduces that god as having respect only to his good qualities, and commending him for his general character; and adds that it had been an indecency in the poet to have given countenance to that base custom by the authority

Did fate, or we, when great Atrides dy'd,
 Urge the hold traitor to the regicide?
 Hermes I sent, while yet his soul remain'd
 Sincere from royal blood, and faith profan'd; 50

of Jupiter. Dacier is not satisfied with this reason, and tells us that Homer gives Egysthus this title, to vindicate Jupiter from the imputation of his crimes: he gives us to understand that heaven is not the cause of man's failings; that he is by creation able to act virtuously, and that it is through his own misconduct that he deviates into evil; and therefore the meaning is this: 'Jupiter calling to mind Egysthus, that Egysthus whom he had created wise and virtuous, and made capable to sustain that character.' And this agrees admirably with the beginning of the speech of Jupiter, who there vindicates his own divinity.

But if this should seem too refined, it may be sufficient to take the word in that good sense which Egysthus might have deserved for many good qualities: thus Achilles is called the swift of foot, even when he stands, or sleeps; the first being his general character. It may be further confirmed by a passage something resembling it in the holy Scriptures: the Egyptian midwives were guilty of a lie to Pharaoh, and yet God pardons it, and blesses them: he blesses them not because they lied, but because they preserved the children of the Israelites.

V. 49. *Hermes I sent, &c.*] It would be endless to observe every moral passage in the *Odyssey*, the whole of it being but one lesson of morality. But surely it must be a pleasure to the reader to learn what notions the ancients had of a deity, from the oldest book extant, except the book of Moses.

Jupiter here declares that he never fails to warn mankind from evil, and that he had sent Mercury for this purpose to Egysthus. It may be asked what is this Mercury whom Jupiter sends? It is the light of nature, which heaven implants in the breast of every man: and which, as Cicero says, is not only more ancient than the world, but coeval with the Master of the world himself. He writes to this effect: 'There was from the beginning such a thing as reason, a

To warn the wretch, that young Orestes, grown
 To manly years, should re-assert the throne.
 Yet impotent of mind, and uncontroll'd,
 He plung'd into the gulf which heav'n foretold.

Here paus'd the god; and pensive thus replies 55
 Minerva, graceful with her azure eyes.
 O thou! from whom the whole creation springs,
 The source of pow'r on earth deriv'd to kings!

direct emanation from nature itself, which prompted to good, and averted from evil. A reason which did not then become a law, when it was first reduced to writing, but was so even from the moment it existed, and it existed from ever, of an equal date with the divine intelligence: it is the true and primordial law, proper to command and to forbid, it is the reason of the great Jupiter.'

That reason of the Supreme Being, is here called Mercury; that reason flowing from God, which is constantly dictating to the most corrupted hearts, 'this is good,' or 'this is evil.' Hence arose an ancient proverb, recorded by Simplicius, 'Reason is a Mercury to all men.' Epictetus [lib. iii. Arrian.] says, 'Apollo knew that Laius would not obey his oracle. Apollo nevertheless did not neglect to prophesy to Laius those evils that threatened him. The goodness of the divinity never fails to advertise mankind; that source of truth is ever open and free: but men are ever incredulous, disobedient, and rebellious.' DACIER.

V. 57. *Minerva's speech.*] It may be asked what relation Ulysses has to Egysthus, that the mention of the one should immediately give occasion for the remembrance of the other? And it may appear unnatural in the poet to give rise to his poem by so unexpected a transition from Egysthus to Ulysses. Eustathius vindicates Homer, by shewing that it is not only beautiful but natural, to take rise from what offers itself to our immediate observation. What can be more natural, when Jupiter is relating how he punishes the wicked, than for Wisdom or Minerva to suggest, that the good ought to be rewarded? There is no forced introduction, no artful preparation;

His death was equal to the direful deed;
 So may the man of blood be doom'd to bleed! 60
 But grief and rage alternate wound my breast
 For brave Ulysses, still by fate oppress.
 Amidst an isle, around whose rocky shore
 The forests murmur, and the surges roar,
 The blameless hero from his wish'd-for home 65
 A goddess guards in her enchanted dome.
 (Atlas her sire, to whose far-piercing eye
 The wonders of the deep expanded lie;

but the whole arises from the occasion, which is a great beauty.
 EUSTATHIUS.

V. 63. *Amidst an isle, &c.*] There was, according to true history, such an island of Calypso, of which Strabo writes; that Solon gives an account of the island Atlantis bordering upon Egypt, and that he went thither to make inquiry, and learned that an island was once there, but by time was vanished. EUSTATHIUS.

V. 67. *Atlas her sire, to whose far-piercing eye
 The wonders of the deep expanded lie;
 Th' eternal columns which on earth he rears
 End in the starry vault, and prop the spheres.]*

Atlas is here said to understand all the depths of the sea: but the epithet *ολοσπρονος*, applied to him, has two different significations. It implies either, 'one whose thoughts are full of terrible and dismal things, or one who has infinite and unbounded views,' and it is doubtful which of them Homer means. To reconcile both, may we not think our author had heard something of the ancient tradition which makes Atlas the same person with Enoch, and represents him as a great astronomer, who prophesied of the universal deluge, and exhorted mankind to repentance? Therefore he named his son Mæthuselah, to shew that after his death the waters should overspread the face of the earth. His continual lamentations on this occasion caused him to be called the weeper; for the world is always an enemy

Th' eternal columns which on earth he rears
 End in the starry vault, and prop the spheres.) 70
 By his fair daughter is the chief confin'd,
 Who soothes to dear delight his anxious mind :
 Successless all her soft caresses prove,
 To banish from his breast his country's love ;
 To see the smoke from his lov'd palace rise, 75
 While the dear isle in distant prospect lies,
 With what contentment could he close his eyes?

to melancholy predictions. Thus Homer upon the credit of this tradition might very well call Atlas, 'one whose thoughts ran upon dismal things,' or 'one whose views and cares were vastly extended.'

I insist no otherwise upon this, but as a conjecture; yet it is further strengthened by what follows in the next lines: 'That Atlas sustains those columns, which being fixed upon the earth support the heavens.' This is generally interpreted of his great skill in astronomy and geography. But may not the reason be more particular? Since Atlas or Enoch had prophesied of the deluge, and since that prediction was looked upon as the effect of his skill in astronomy; might it not be said he knew the abysses of the sea, and sustained the pillars of heaven, to express that he knew how the fountains of the deep, and the waters above the heavens, should unite to drown the earth?

As to the image of the pillars of heaven, it is frequent in the sacred books, and used to express the height of vast mountains. (Pindar calls *Ætna* the *σπονδα νερα*;) and there might probably be something more particular that furnished Homer with this idea; I mean the pillars of Hercules, well known in his time, and neighbouring to the mountain he describes. DACIER.

See the description of this mountain in the fourth book of Virgil, where the same image is preserved without any hint of allegory: as indeed it is no more than a poetical manner of expressing the great height and extensive prospect of the mountain.

V. 75. *To see the smoke from his lov'd palace rise.*] There is an

And will Omnipotence neglect to save
 The suff'ring virtue of the wise and brave?
 Must he, whose altars on the Phrygian shore 80
 With frequent rites, and pure, avow'd thy pow'r,
 Be doom'd the worst of human ills to prove,
 Unbless'd, abandon'd to the wrath of Jove?

Daughter! what words have pass'd thy lips unweigh'd?
 (Reply'd the thund'rer to the martial maid) 85

agreeable tenderness in this image, and nothing can better paint the ardent desire a man naturally has to review his native country after a long absence. This is still stronger than that which Cicero extols in several places of his works, that Ulysses preferred the sight of Ithaca to the immortality proffered him by Calypso. He here desires to purchase, at the price of his life, the pleasure, not of returning to his country, but even of seeing at a distance the very smoke of it.
 DACIER.

There are some things dispersed in this speech of Pallas, which I shall lay together; as that Minerva makes it an aggravation to the calamity of Ulysses, to be detained by a goddess that loves him; that he is enclosed in an island; and she adds, round which the seas flow; as if that was not common to all islands; but these expressions are used to shew the impossibility of the escape of Ulysses, without the interposition of Jupiter.

In the conclusion she observes, that Ulysses never neglected to sacrifice before Troy: this is said to shew the great piety of Ulysses, who not only paid his sacrifices in Ithaca, where he abounded in riches, but amongst strangers in an enemy's country, where there might be a scarcity of offerings. EUSTATHIUS.

V. 84. *Daughter! what words, &c.*] This verse is frequently repeated both in the Iliad and the Odyssey; it has here a particular energy. Jupiter reproves Minerva for supposing he could ever be unmindful of an hero so pious as Ulysses. It is spoken with vehemence; an instance, says Eustathius, that it is not only equitable,

Deem not unjustly by my doom oppress
 Of human race the wisest and the best.
 Neptune, by pray'r repentant rarely won,
 Afflicts the chief, t' avenge his giant son,
 Whose visual orb Ulysses robb'd of light; 90
 Great Polypheme, of more than mortal might!
 Him young Thoösa bore (the bright increase
 Of Phorcys, dreaded in the sounds and seas:)
 Whom Neptune ey'd with bloom of beauty blest,
 And in his cave the yielding nymph compr'est. 95
 For this, the god constrains the Greek to roam,
 A hopeless exile from his native home,
 From death alone exempt—but cease to mourn;
 Let all combine t' achieve his wish'd return:
 Neptune aton'd, his wrath shall now refrain, 100
 Or thwart the synod of the gods in vain.

Father and king ador'd! Minerva cry'd,
 Since all who in th' Olympian bow'r reside

but an attribute of divinity, for rulers to remember those who serve them faithfully.

*V. 89. *T' avenge his giant son.*] It is artful in the poet to tell the reader the occasion of the sufferings of Ulysses in the opening of the poem; it is a justice due to his character, to shew that his misfortunes are not the consequence of his crimes, but the effect of Neptune's anger.

It is observable, that Homer does not stop to explain how Ulysses put out the eye of the Cyclops: he hastens forward into the middle of his poem, and leaves that for the future narration of Ulysses.

Now make the wand'ring Greek their public care,
 Let Hermes to th' * Atlantic isle repair; 105
 Did him, arriv'd in bright Calypso's court,
 The sanction of th' assembled pow'rs report:
 That wise Ulysses to his native land
 Must speed, obedient to their high command.
 Meantime Telemachus, the blooming heir 110
 Of sea-girt Ithaca, demands my care:

V. 110. *Meantime Telemachus — demands my care, &c.*] Rapin has raised several objections against this piece of conduct in Homer: he tells us that the action of the Odyssey is imperfect, that it begins with the voyages of Telemachus, and ends with those of Ulysses: that the four first books are all concerning Telemachus: that his voyage bears no proportion to that of Ulysses: that it contributes nothing to his return, which is brought about by Jupiter, and the assistance of the Phœacians: that this gave occasion to Beni in his Academical Discourses to assert, that the Fable of the Odyssey is double: that the four first books of it are neither episode, nor part of an action, nor have any connexion with the rest of the work.

I am of opinion, that these objections are made with too great severity; the destruction of the suitors is the chief hinge upon which the poem turns, as it contributes chiefly to the re-establishment of Ulysses in his country and regality; and whatever contributes to this end, contributes to the principal action, and is of a piece with the rest of the poem: and that this voyage does so is evident, in that it gives a defeat to the suitors, and controuls their insolence; it preserves Ulysses's throne and bed inviolate, in that it gives Telemachus courage to resist their attempts; it sets his character in a fair point of light, who is the second personage of the poem, and is to have a great share in the future actions of it.

Eustathius judiciously observes, that Homer here prepares the way for the defeat of the suitors, the chief design of his poem; and lays the

'Tis mine, to form his green, unpractis'd years,
 In sage debates; surrounded with his peers,
 To save the state; and timely to restrain
 The bold intrusion of the suitor-train; 115
 Who crowd his palace, and with lawless pow'r
 His herds and flocks in feastful rites devour.
 To distant Sparta, and the spacious waste
 Of sandy Pyle, the royal youth shall haste.

ground-work of probability on which he intends to build his poem, and reconcile it to the rules of credibility.

If it be asked for what end this voyage of Telemachus is made; the answer is, to inquire after Ulysses: so that whatever episodes are interwoven, Ulysses is still in view; and whatever Telemachus acts, is undertaken solely upon his account; and consequently, whatever is acted, contributes to the principal design, the restoration of Ulysses. So that the fable is entire, and the action not double.

It is to be remembered also, that the sufferings of Ulysses are the subject of the poem; his personal calamities are not only intended, but his domestic misfortunes; and by this conduct Homer shews us the extent of his misfortunes: his queen is attempted, his throne threatened, and his wealth consumed in riot; Ulysses suffers in Telemachus, and in every circumstance of life is unhappy.

V. 112. *'Tis mine, to form his green, unpractis'd years, &c.*] In this the poet draws the outlines of what he is to fill up in the four subsequent books: and nothing can give us a greater idea of his unbounded invention, than his building upon so plain a foundation such a noble superstructure: he entertains us with variety of episodes, historical relations, and manners of those ancient times: it must be confessed, that the characters in the Odyssey, and the number of the chief actors, are but few; and yet the poet never tires: he varies and diversifies the story so happily, that he is continually opening new scenes to engage our attention. He resembles his own Proteus, he is capable of all shapes, yet in all shapes the same deity.

There, warm with filial love, the cause inquire 120
 That from his realm retards his godlike sire :
 Deliv'ring early to the voice of fame
 The promise of a great, immortal name.

She said: the sandals of celestial mould
 Fledg'd with ambrosial plumes, and rich with gold, 125
 Surround her feet: with these sublime she sails
 Th' aerial space, and mounts the winged gales :
 O'er earth and ocean wide prepar'd to soar,
 Her dreaded arm a beamy jav'lin bore, 129

V. 118. *To distant Sparta, and the spacious waste
 Of sandy Iyle —*]

Rapin is very severe upon this conduct. When Telemachus, says he, is to search for his father in the courts of Greece, he cannot make the least progress without Minerva; it is she who inspires his thoughts, and assists in the execution. Could not honour, duty, or nature, have moved his heart towards an absent father? The machine, adds he, has not the least appearance of probability, inasmuch as the goddess conducts him to every place, except only where Ulysses resides; of which she ought by no means to be ignorant, upon the account of her divinity.

But surely nothing can be more natural, than for a son, in order to gain intelligence of an absent father, to inquire in those places, and of those persons, where and from whom he is most likely to have information. Such is the conduct of Telemachus: and poetry, which delights in the wonderful, because this conduct agrees with wisdom, ascribes it to Minerva the goddess of it. No doubt but Minerva knew where Ulysses resided: but men must act as men; such an immediate interposition as Rapin requires, had stopped at once the fountain of the poet's invention. If what a poet invents be natural, it is justifiable; and he may give the rein to his imagination, if he restrain it from running into extravagance and wildness.

Pond'rous and vast; which, when her fury burns,
 Proud tyrants humbles, and whole hosts o'erturns.
 From high Olympus prone her flight she bends,
 And in the realm of Ithaca descends.
 Her lineaments divine, the grave disguise
 Of Mentès' form conceal'd from human eyes: 135
 (Mentès, the monarch of the Taphian land)
 A glitt'ring spear wav'd awful in her hand.
 There in the portal plac'd, the heav'n-born maid
 Enormous riot and misrule survey'd.

V. 136. *Mentès, the monarch of the Taphian land.*] We are told by tradition, that Homer was so sensible of friendship, that to do honour to his particular friends, he immortalised their names in his poems. In the *Iliad* he has shewn his gratitude to Tycheus; and in the *Odyssey*, to Mentès, Phemius, and Mentor. This Mentès was a famous merchant of the isle of Leucade, who received Homer at Smyrna, and made him his companion in all his voyages. It is to this Mentès we owe the two poems of Homer; for the poet in all probability had never wrote them without those lights and informations he received, and the discoveries he was enabled to make, by those travels. Homer is not contented to give his name to the kings of the Taphians, but feigns also that the goddess of wisdom chose to appear in his shape preferably to that of all the kings who were nearer neighbours to Ithaca. Eustathius thinks there might have been a real king of Taphos of this name, who was a friend to Ulysses. This may possibly be; but I would choose to adhere rather to the old tradition, as it does honour to friendship. DACIER.

V. 139. *Enormous riot and misrule.*] This is the first appearance of the suitors; and the poet has drawn their pictures in such colours as are agreeable to their characters through the whole poem. They are, as Horace expresses it,

' — — — Fruges consumere nati,
 Sponsi Penelopes, Nebulones' ———

On hides of heeves, before the palace gate, 140
 (Sad spoils of luxury) the suitors sat.
 With rival art, and ardour in their mien,
 At chess they vie, to captivate the queen;
 Divining of their loves. Attending nigh,
 A menial train the flowing bowl supply: 145
 Others, apart, the spacious hall prepare,
 And form the costly feast with busy care.

The poet gives a fine contrast between them and Telemachus; he entertains himself with his own thoughts, weighs the sum of things, and beholds with a virtuous sorrow the disorders of the suitors: he appears (like Ulysses among his transformed companions in the tenth book) a wise man among brutes.

V. 143. *At chess they vie, to captivate the queen;
 Divining of their loves, ———*]

There are great disputes what this game was at which the suitors played. Athenæus relates it from Apian the grammarian, who had it from Cteson a native of Ithaca, that the sport was in this manner. The number of the suitors being one hundred and eight, they equally divided their men or balls; that is to say, fifty four on each side; these were placed on the board opposite to each other. Between the two sides was a vacant space, in the midst of which was the main mark, or queen, the point which all were to aim at. They took their turns by lot; he who took or displaced that mark, got his own in its place; and if by a second man he again took it, without touching any of the others, he won the game; and it passed as an omen of obtaining his mistress. This principal mark, or queen, was called by whatever name the gamesters pleased; and the suitors gave it the name of Penelope.

It is said that this game was invented by Palamedes during the siege of Troy. [SOPHOCLES in PALAM.] EUSTATHIUS. SPONDANUS, DACIER.

There young Telemachus, his bloomy face
Glowing celestial sweet, with godlike grace
Amid the circle shines: but hope and fear 150
(Painful vicissitude!) his bosom tear.
Now imag'd in his mind, he sees restor'd
In peace and joy, the people's rightful lord;
The proud oppressors fly the vengeful sword.
While his fond soul these fancied triumphs swell'd; 155
The stranger guest, the royal youth beheld:
Griev'd that a visitant so long should wait
Unmark'd, unhonour'd, at a monarch's gate;
Instant he flew with hospitable haste,
And the new friend with courteous air embrac'd. 160
Stranger! whoe'er thou art, securely rest,
Alliand in my faith, a friendly guest:
Approach the dome, the social banquet share,
And then the purpose of thy soul declare.
Thus affable and mild, the prince precedes, 165
And to the dome th' unknown celestial leads.
The spear receiving from her hand, he plac'd
Against a column, fair with sculpture grac'd;

V. 157. *Griev'd that a visitant so long should wait.*] The reader will lose much of the pleasure of this poem, if he reads it without the reflection, that he peruses one of the most ancient books in the world: it sets before him persons, places, and actions, that existed three thousand years ago. Here we have an instance of the humanity of those early ages: Telemachus pays a reverence to this stranger, only because he is a stranger; he attends him in person, and welcomes him with all the openness of ancient hospitality.

Where seemly rang'd in peaceful order stood
 Ulysses' arms, now long disus'd to blood. 170
 He led the goddess to the sov'reign seat,
 Her feet supported with a stool of state;
 (A purple carpet spread the pavement wide)
 Then drew his seat, familiar, to her side;
 Far from the suitor-train, a brutal crowd, . 175
 With insolence, and wine, elate and loud:
 Where the free guest, unnoted, might relate,
 If haply conscious, of his father's fate.
 The golden ew'r a maid obsequious brings,
 Replenish'd from the cool, translucent springs; 180
 With copious water the bright vase supplies
 A silver laver, of capacious size:
 They wash. The tables in fair order spread,
 They heap the glitt'ring canisters with bread:
 Viands of various kinds allure the taste, 185
 Of choicest sort and savour, rich repast!

V. 185, &c. *The feast describ'd.*] There is nothing that has drawn more ridicule upon Homer than the frequent descriptions of his entertainments: it has been judged, that he was more than ordinarily delighted with them, since he omits no opportunity to describe them; nay his temperance has not been unsuspected, according to that verse of Horace,

'Laudibus arguitur vini vinosus Homerus.'

But we must not condemn without stronger evidence: a man may commend a sumptuous entertainment, or good wines, without being either a drunkard or a glutton. But since there are so many entertainments described in the poem, it may not be improper to give *this* some explanation.

Delicious wines th' attending herald brought;
The gold gave lustre to the purple draught.
Lur'd with the vapour of the fragrant feast,
In rush'd the suitors with voracious haste: 190
Marshall'd in order due, to each a sew'r
Presents, to bathe his hands, a radiant ew'r.
Luxurious then they feast. Observant round
Gay stripling youths the brimming goblets crown'd.
The rage of hunger quell'd, they all advance, 195
And form to measur'd airs the mazy dance:

They wash before the feast; perhaps, says Eustathius, because they always, at the feast, made libations to the gods. The ewer was of gold, the vessel from whence the water was poured of silver, and the cups out of which they drank were of gold.

A damsel attends Menes, but heralds wait upon the suitors: Eustathius observes a decency in this conduct; the suitors were lewd debauchees, and consequently a woman of modesty would have been an improper attendant upon such a company. Beautiful youths attend the company in quality of cup-bearers.

A matron who has the charge of the household (*ταμην*) brings in the bread and the cold meats, for so Eustathius interprets *ειδαλα*; an officer, whose employ it was to portion out the victuals, brings in the meats that furnished out the rest of the entertainment; and after the feast, a bard diverts them with vocal and instrumental music.

Dacier is in great pain about the cold victuals; she is afraid lest the reader should think them the leavings of a former day: and tells us they might possibly be in the nature of our cold tongues, jambons, &c. But I think such fears to be groundless: we must have reference to the customs of those early ages; and if it was customary for cold meats to be served up (neither is it necessary to suppose them the leavings of the former entertainment) it can be no disgrace to the hospitality of Telemachus.

To Phemius was consign'd the chorded lyre,
 Whose hand reluctant touch'd the warbling wire;
 Phemius, whose voice divine could sweetest sing
 High strains, responsive to the vocal string. 200

Meanwhile, in whispers to his heav'nly guest
 His indignation thus the prince exprest.

Indulge my rising grief, whilst these (my friend)
 With song and dance the pompous revel end.
 Light is the dance, and doubly sweet the lays, 205
 When, for the dear delight, another pays.
 His treasur'd stores these cormorants consume,
 Whose bones, defrauded of a regal tomb
 And common turf, lie naked on the plain,
 Or doom'd to welter in the whelming main. 210
 Should he return, that troop so blithe and bold,
 With purple robes inwrought, and stiff with gold,

V. 197. *To Phemius was consign'd the chorded lyre.* In ancient times princes entertained in their families certain learned and wise men, who were both poets and philosophers, and not only made it their business to amuse and delight, but to promote wisdom and morality. Ulysses, at his departure for Troy, left one of these with Penelope: and it was usual to consign in this manner the care of their wives and families to the poets of those days, as appears from a signal passage in the third book, verse (of the original) 267, &c. To this man Homer gives the name of Phemius, to celebrate one of his friends, who was so called, and who had been his preceptor (says Eustathius). I must add one remark, that though he places his master here in no very good company, yet he guards his character from any imputation, by telling us, that he attended the suitors by compulsion. This is not only a great instance of his gratitude, but also of his tenderness and delicacy.

Precipitant in fear, would wing their flight,
 And curse their cumb'rous pride's unwieldy weight.
 But ah I dream!—th' appointed hour is fled, 215
 And hope, too long with vain delusion fed,
 Deaf to the rumour of fallacious fame,
 Gives to the roll of death his glorious name!
 With venial freedom let me now demand
 Thy name, thy lineage, and paternal land: 220
 Sincere, from whence began thy course, recite,
 And to what ship I owe the friendly freight?
 Now first to me this visit dost thou deign,
 Or number'd in my father's social train?
 All who deserv'd his choice, he made his own, 225
 And curious much to know, he far was known.

My birth I boast (the blue-ey'd virgin cries)
 From great Anchialus, renown'd and wise:
 Mentos my name; I rule the Taphian race,
 Whose bounds the deep circumfluent waves embrace:
 A duteous people, and industrious isle, 231
 To naval arts inur'd, and stormy toil.

V. 225. *All who deserv'd his choice* —] It is evident from this and many other places in the *Iliad*, that hospitality was hereditary; and happiness and honour peculiar to those heroic ages. And surely nothing can set the character of Ulysses in a more agreeable point of light than what Telemachus here delivers of it: 'He was the friend of all mankind.' Eustathius observes, that *εμιστροπος* has a middle signification; that it implies that Ulysses behaved benevolently to all men, or that all men behaved benevolently to Ulysses; either sense makes Ulysses a very amiable person: he must be a friend to all men to whom all men are friends.

Freight'd with iron from my native land,
 I steer my voyage to the Brutian strand;
 To gain by commerce, for the labour'd mass, 235
 A just proportion of refulgent brass.
 Far from your capital my ship resides
 At Reithrus, and secure at anchor rides;
 Where waving groves on airy Neion grow,
 Supremely tall, and shade the deeps below. 240
 Thence to revisit your imperial dome,
 An old hereditary guest I come:
 Your father's friend. Laertes can relate
 Our faith unspotted, and its early date;
 Who prest with heart-corroding grief and years, 245
 'To the gay court a rural shed prefers,

V. 234. *I steer my voyage to the Brutian strand.*] In the country of the Brutians, in the lower part of Italy, was a town called Temese. That Homer here meant this city, and not one of the same name in Cyprus, appears not only because this was famous for works of brass, but because (as Strabo observes) Ithaca lay in the direct way from Taphos to this city of the Brutii; whereas it was considerably out of the way to pass by Ithaca to that of Cyprus. The same author says, that the rooms for preparing of brass were remaining in his time, though then out of use. OVID. MET. xv.

‘ Hippotadaeque domos regis, Temesesque metalla.’

And Statius, Sylv.

‘ — — — se totis Temese dedit hausta metallis.’

Bochart is of opinion, that the name of Temese was given to this town by the Phœnicians, from the brass it produced, Temes in their language signifying fusion of metals: an art to which the Phœnicians much applied themselves. EUSTATHIUS. DACIER.

Where sole of all his train, a matron sage
 Supports with homely food his drooping age,
 With feeble steps from marshalling his vines
 Returning sad, when toilsome day declines. 250

With friendly speed, induc'd by erring fame,
 To hail Ulysses' safe return I came:
 But still the frown of some celestial pow'r
 With envious joy retards the blissful hour.
 Let not your soul be sunk in sad despair; 255
 He lives, he breathes this heav'nly vital air,

V. 245. *Laertes's retirement.*] This most beautiful passage of Laertes has not escaped the censure of the critics: they say he acts an unmanly part, he forgets that he is a king, and reduces himself unworthily into the condition of a servant. Fastathius gives two reasons for his retirement, which answer those objections: the first is, that he could not endure to see the outrage and insolence of the suitors; the second, that his grief for Ulysses makes him abandon society, and prefer his vineyard to his court. This is undoubtedly the picture of human nature under affliction; for sorrow loves solitude. Thus it is, as Dacier well observes, that Menedemus in Terence laments his lost son: Menedemus is the picture of Laertes. Nor does it make any difference, that the one is a king, the other a person of private station: kings are but ennobled humanity, and are liable, as other men, to as great, if not greater sensibility.

The word *σπρωζοιτα* (creeping about his vineyard) has also given offence, as it carries an idea of meanness with it; but Fastathius observes, that it excellently expresses the melancholy of Laertes, and denotes no meanness of spirit: the same word is applied to the great Achilles in the Iliad, when he laments at the obsequies of Patroclus; and Horace, no doubt, had it in his view,

‘ — — — Tacitum sylvas inter-reptare salubres.’

Among a savage race, whose shelley bounds
With ceaseless roar the foaming deep surrounds.
The thoughts which roll within my ravish'd breast,
To me, no scer, th' inspiring gods suggest; 260
Nor skill'd, nor studious, with prophetic eye
To judge the winged omens of the sky.
Yet hear this certain speech, nor deem it vain;
Though adamantine bonds the chief restrain,
The dire restraint his wisdom will defeat, 265
And soon restore him to his regal seat.
But, gen'rous youth! sincere and free declare,
Are you, of manly growth, his royal heir?
For sure Ulysses in your look appears,
The same his features, if the same his years. 270

V. 257. *Among a savage race, &c.*] It is the observation of Eustathius, that what Minerva here delivers bears resemblance to the oracles, in which part is false, and part true: that Ulysses is detained in an island, is a truth; that he is detained by barbarians, a falsehood: this is done by the goddess, that she may be thought to be really a man, as she appears to be; she speaks with the dubiousness of a man, not the certainty of a goddess; she raises his expectation by shewing she has an insight into futurity; and to engage his belief she discovers in part the truth to Telemachus. Neither was it necessary or convenient for Telemachus to know the whole truth: for if he had known that Ulysses inhabited a desert, detained by a goddess, he must of consequence have known of his return (for he that could certify the one, could certify the other), and so had never gone in search of him; and it would hence have happened, that Homer had been deprived of giving us those graces of poetry which arise from the voyage of Telemachus. EUSTATHIUS.

Such was that face, on which I dwelt with joy
 Ere Greece assembled stemm'd the tides to Troy;
 But parting then for that detested shore,
 Our eyes unhappy! never greeted more.

To prove a genuine birth (the prince replies)
 On female truth assenting faith relies; 276

V. 275. *To prove a genuine birth, &c.*] There is an appearance of something very shocking in this speech of Telemachus. It literally runs thus: 'My mother assures me that I am the son of Ulysses, but I know it not.' It seems to reflect upon his mother's chastity, as if he had a doubt of his own legitimacy. This seeming simplicity in Telemachus, says Eustathius, is the effect of a troubled spirit; it is grief that makes him doubt if he can be the son of the great, the generous Ulysses; it is no reflection upon Penelope, and consequently no fault in Telemachus: it is an undoubted truth that the mother only knows the legitimacy of the child: thus Euripides,

Ἢ μὲν, γὰρ αὐτῆς οἶδεν ὄντα, ὃδ' οἴεται.

that is, the mother knows the child, the father only believes it.

Thus also Menander,

Αὐτὸν γὰρ ἠδὲις οἶδε, τῇ ποτ' ἐγένετο·
 Ἀλλ' ὑπονοήμεν πάντες, ἣ πιστεύομεν.

that is, No man knows assuredly who begot him, we only guess it, and believe it.

Aristotle in his rhetoric is also of this opinion;

Ἀρίστα περὶ τῶν τέκνων κρίνουν αἱ γυναῖκες.

What I have here said is literally translated from Eustathius, and if it edifies the reader I am content. But the meaning of the passage is this, Menes asks Telemachus if he be the son of Ulysses; he replies, 'So my mother assures me; but nothing sure so wretched as I am could proceed from that great man.'

But however this may be reconciled to truth, I believe few ladies

Thus manifest of right, I build my claim
 Sure-founded on a fair maternal fame,
 Ulysses' son: but happier he whom fate 279
 Hath plac'd beneath the storms which toss the great!
 Happier the son whose hoary sire is blest
 With humble affluence, and domestic rest!
 Happier than I, to future empire born,
 But doom'd a father's wretched fate to mourn! 284
 To whom, with aspect mild, the guest divine.
 Oh true descendant of a scepter'd line!
 The gods, a glorious fate from anguish free
 To chaste Penelope's increase decree.
 But say, yon' jovial troop so gaily drest,
 Is this a bridal or a friendly feast! 290
 Or from their deed I rightlier may divine,
 Unseemly flown with insolence and wine;
 Unwelcome revellers, whose lawless joy
 Pains the sage ear, and hurts the sober eye?
 Magnificence of old (the prince reply'd) 295
 Beneath our roof with virtue could reside;
 Unblam'd abundance crown'd the royal board
 What time this dome rever'd her prudent lord;
 Who now (so heav'n decrees) is doom'd to mourn,
 Bitter constraint! erroneous and forlorn. 300

would take it as a compliment, if their sons should tell them there
 was room to doubt of their legitimacy; there may be abundance of
 truth in it, and yet very little decency.

Better the chief, on Ilion's hostile plain,
 Had fall'n surrounded with his warlike train;
 Or safe return'd, the race of glory past,
 New to his friends embrace, had breath'd his last!
 Then 'grateful Greece with streaming eyes would raise
 Historic marbles, to record his praise; 306
 His praise, eternal on the faithful stone,
 Had with transmissive honour grac'd his son.
 Now snatch'd by harpies to the dreary coast,
 Sunk is the hero, and his glory lost: 310
 Vanish'd at once! unheard of, and unknown!
 And I his heir in misery alone.
 Nor for a dear, lost father only flow
 The filial tears, but woe succeeds to woe:
 To tempt the spouseless queen with am'rous wiles,
 Resort the nobles from the neighb'ring isles; 316

V. 309. *Now snatch'd by harpies, &c.*] The meaning of this expression is, that Ulysses has not had the rites of sepulture. This among the ancients was esteemed the greatest of calamities, as it hindered the shades of the deceased from entering into the state of the happy.

, V. 315. *To tempt the spouseless queen — resort the nobles.*] It is necessary to reconcile the conduct of the suitors to probability, since it has so great a share in the process of the *Odyssey*. It may seem incredible that Penelope, who is a queen, in whom the supreme power is lodged, should not dismiss such unwelcome intruders, especially since many of them were her own subjects: besides, it seems an extraordinary way of courtship in them, to ruin the person to whom they make their addresses.

To solve this objection we must consider the nature of the Grecian governments: the chief men of the land had great authority:

From Samos, circled with th' Ìonian main,
 Dulichium, and Zacynthus' sylvan reign :
 Ev'n with presumptuous hope her bed t' ascend,
 The lords of Ithaca their right pretend. 320
 She seems attentive to their pleaded vows,
 Her heart detesting what her ear allows.
 They, vain expectants of the bridal hour,
 My stores in riotous expence devour,
 In feast and dance the mirthful months employ, 325
 And meditate my doom, to crown their joy.

With tender pity touch'd, the goddess cry'd :
 Soon may kind heav'n a sure relief provide,
 Soon may your sire discharge the vengeance due,
 And all your wrongs the proud oppressors rue! 330
 Oh! in that portal should the chief appear,
 Each hand tremendous with a brazen spear,
 In radiant panoply his limbs incas'd ;
 (For so of old my father's court he grac'd,
 When social mirth unbent his serious soul, 335
 O'er the full banquet, and the sprightly bowl)
 He then from Ephyré, the fair domain
 Of Ilus, sprung from Jason's royal strain,
 Measur'd a length of seas, a toilsome length, in vain.

though the government was monarchical, it was not despotic: Laertes was retired, and disabled with age; Telcmachus was yet in his minority; and the fear of any violence either against her own person, or against her son, might deter Penelope from using any endeavours to remove men of such insolence, and such power. DACIER.

For voyaging to learn the direful art 340
 To taint with deadly drugs the barbed dart;
 Observant of the gods, and sternly just,
 Ilus refus'd t' impart the baneful trust:
 With friendlier zeal my father's soul was fir'd,
 The drugs he knew, and gave the boon desir'd. 345
 Appear'd he now with such heroic port,
 As then conspicuous at the Taphian court;
 Soon should you' boasters cease their haughty strife,
 Or each atone his guilty love with life.
 But of his wish'd return the care resign; 350
 Be future vengeance to the pow'rs divine.
 My sentence hear: with stern distaste avow'd,
 To their own districts drive the suitor-crowd:

V. 341. *To taint with deadly drugs the barbed dart.*] It is necessary to explain this passage. It seems at first view, as if Ulysses had requested what a good man could not grant. Ilus, says Menes, denied the poison, because he feared the anger of the gods; and the poison itself is called by Homer *Ανδρικότρονον*, as if it were designed against mankind. Eustathius defends Ulysses variously: he intended, says he, to employ it against beasts only, that infested his country, or in hunting. He assigns another reason, and says, that the poet is preparing the way to give an air of probability to the destruction of the suitors. He poisons his arrows, that every wound may be mortal; on this account the poison may be called *ανδρικότρονον*; for it is certain in the wars of Troy poisoned arrows were not in use, for many persons who were wounded recovered; so that of necessity they must be reserved for domestic occasions. From what has been said we may collect the reason why Anchialus granted the poison to Ulysses, and Ilus denied it; Anchialus was the friend of Ulysses, and knew that he would not employ it to any ill purpose: but Ilus, who was a stranger to him, was afraid lest he should abuse it. EUSTATHIUS.

When next the morning warms the purple east,
 Convoke the peerage, and the gods attest ; 355
 The sorrows of your inmost soul relate ;
 And form sure plans to save the sinking state.
 Should second love a pleasing flame inspire,
 And the chaste queen connubial rites require ;
 Dismiss'd with honour, let her hence repair 360
 To great Icarius, whose paternal care
 Will guide her passion, and reward her choice
 With wealthy dow'r, and bridal gifts of price.

V. 360. *Dismiss'd with honour, let her hence repair.*] I will lay before the reader literally what Eustathius observes upon these words. There is a solecism, says he, in these verses or words, that cannot be reduced to the rules of construction. It should be *μητρῆς*, not *μητρεα* *αὐτῇ* *ἴτω*. How then comes the accusative case to be used instead of the nominative? Mentos, adds he, may be supposed to have intended to have said *ἀποστείμην*, (send thy mother away;) but considering in the midst of the sentence, that such advice was not suitable to be given to Telemachus, he checks himself and suppresses *ἀποστείμην*; and no other word immediately occurring, that required an accusative case, he falls into a solecism.

But perhaps this is more ingenious than true; though Mentos was in haste when he spoke it, Homer was not when he composed it. Might not an error creep into the original by the negligence of a transcriber, who might write *Μητρεα* for *Μητρῆς*? This is the more probable, because the one stands in the verse in every respect as well as the other.

What Eustathius adds is very absurd: he says that Telemachus must observe both the interpretations, either send thy mother away, or let thy mother retire. So that the advice was double, send thy mother away if thou dost not love her; but if thou art unwilling to grieve her, let her recess be voluntary.

Then let this dictate of my love prevail:
 Instant, to foreign realms prepare to sail, 365
 To learn your father's fortunes: fame may prove,
 Or omen'd voice, (the messenger of Jove)
 Propitious to the search. Direct your toil
 Through the wide ocean first to sandy Pyle;
 Of Nestor, hoary sage, his doom demand: 370
 Then speed your voyage to the Spartan strand;
 For young Atrides to th' Achaian coast
 Arriv'd the last of all the victor host.
 If yet Ulysses views the light; forbear,
 Till the fleet hours restore the circling year. 375
 But if his soul hath wing'd the destin'd flight,
 Inhabitant of deep disastrous night;
 Homeward with pious speed repass the main,
 To the pale shade funereal rites ordain,
 * Plant the fair column o'er the vacant grave, 380
 A hero's honours let the hero have.
 With decent grief the royal dead deplor'd,
 For the chaste queen select an equal lord.

* V. 367. *Omen'd voice* — *of Jove*.] 'There is a difficulty in this passage. In any case of inquiry, any words that were heard by accident were called by the Latins, *omens*; by Homer, the voice of Jupiter; and he styles them so, because it is through his providence that those words come to our knowledge: *κλος* signifies *fame* or *rumour*; and the ancients referred all voices or sounds to Jupiter; and styled him *Zeus παντομῶσιος*. So that the voice of Jove implies any words that we hear by chance, from whence we can draw any thing that gives light to our concerns or inquiries. DACIER. EUSTATHIUS.

Then let revenge your daring mind employ,
 By fraud or force the suitor-train destroy, 385
 And starting into manhood, scorn the boy.
 Hast thou not heard how young Orestes, fir'd
 With great revenge, immortal praise acquir'd?
 His virgin sword, Ægysthus' veins imbrud;
 The murd'rer fell, and blood aton'd for blood, 390
 O greatly bless'd with ev'ry blooming grace!
 With equal steps the paths of glory trace;
 Join to that royal youth's your rival name,
 And shine eternal in the sphere of fame, —
 But my associates now my stay deplore, 395
 Impatient on the hoarse-resounding shore.
 Thou, heedful of advice, secure proceed;
 My praise the precept is, be thine the deed.

The counsel of my friend (the youth rejoin'd)
 Imprints conviction on my grateful mind. 400

V. 387. *Hast thou not heard, &c.*] It may seem that this example of Orestes does not come fully up to the purpose intended: there is a wide difference in the circumstances: Orestes slew an adulterer, and a single person, with an adulteress. The designs of Telemachus are not against one, but many enemies; neither are they adulterers, nor have they slain the father of Telemachus, as is the case of Orestes: nor is Penelope an adulteress. The intent therefore of the goddess is only to shew what a glorious act it is to defend our parents: Orestes, says Mentis, is every where celebrated for honouring his father, and thou shalt obtain equal honour by defending thy mother.

The sense that *παῖς πορνέυς* here bears is remarkable, it signifies not only a person who kills his own father, but who kills the father of any other person. EUSTATHIUS.

So fathers speak (persuasive speech and mild)
 Their sage experience to the fav'rite child.
 But, since to part, for sweet refection due
 The genial viands let my train renew :
 And the rich pledge of plighted faith receive, 405
 Worthy the heir of Ithaca to give.

Defer the promis'd boon, (the goddess cries,
 Celestial azure bright'ning in her eyes)
 And let me now regain the Reithrian port:
 From Temesé return'd, your royal court 410
 I shall revisit; and that pledge receive;
 And gifts, memorial of our friendship, leave.

Abrupt, with eagle-speed she cut the sky;
 Instant invisible to mortal eye.
 Then first he recognis'd th' ethereal guest; 415
 Wonder and joy alternate fire his breast:
 Heroic thoughts, infus'd, his heart dilate:
 Revolving much his father's doubtful fate,
 At length, compos'd, he join'd the suitor-throng;
 Hush'd in attention to the warbled song. 420

V. 413. — *With eagle-speed she cut the sky;*
Instant invisible —

I pass over the several interpretations that have been given to the word *αεττα*; some say it implies she flew up the chimney, &c. In reality it signifies a species of an eagle: but it may also signify the same as *αφανής* (invisible); either of the latter senses are natural, or both together, 'like an eagle she disappeared.' EUSTATHIUS.

V. 420. *Hush'd in attention to the warbled song.*] There may be two reasons why this is inserted; either the suitors were pleased with the

His tender theme the charming lyrist chose
Minerva's anger, and the direful woes
Which voyaging from Troy the victors bore,
While storms vindictive intercept the shore.
The shrilling airs the vaulted roof rebounds, 425
Reflecting to the queen the silver sounds.
With grief renew'd the weeping fair descends;
Their sov'reign's step a virgin train attends:

sweetness of the song, or the subject of it; they sat attentive to hear the death of Ulysses, in the process of his story. This gives us a reason why immediately Penelope descended to stop the song; she feared lest he might touch upon the story of Ulysses, and say that he died in his return. This would have reduced her to the utmost necessity, and she could not have deferred to marry. Phemius would have certainly found credit, for poets were believed to be inspired by the gods; they were looked upon as prophets, and to have something of divinity in them, as appears from Demodocus in the eighth book of the *Odyssey*. Besides there was a further necessity to put a stop to the song. If Phemius had declared him to be dead, Penelope could not have avoided marriage; if alive, the suitors might have desisted, or armed themselves against Ulysses, and then their deaths, one of the principal incidents of the poem, could not have followed; neither could Telemachus have gone in search of his father, if he had foreknown his death, or sudden return. It is therefore artful in the poet to cut the song short; he reserves the story of Ulysses for future narration; and brings all this about by a very probable method, by the interposition of Penelope, who requests that some other story may be chosen, a story that she can hear without sorrow.

It is very customary for women to be present at the entertainments of men; as appears from the conduct of Helen, Arete, Nausicaa, and Penelope, in divers parts of the *Odyssey*: she is here introduced with the greatest decency; she enters not the room, but stands with tears at the threshold; and even at that distance appears with her face shaded by a veil, EUSTATIUS.

A veil of richest texture wrought, she wears,
And silent to the joyous hall repairs. 430
There from the portal, with her mild command
Thus gently checks the minstrel's tuneful hand.

Phœmius! let acts of gods, and heroes old,
What ancient bards in hall and bow'r have told,
Attemper'd to the lyre, your voice employ; 435
Such the pleas'd ear will drink with silent joy.
But oh! forbear that dear, disastrous name,
To sorrow sacred, and secure of fame:
My bleeding bosom sickens at the sound,
And ev'ry piercing note inflicts a wound. 440

Why, dearest object of my duteous love,
(Reply'd the prince) will you the bard reprove?
Oft', Jove's ethereal rays (resistless fire)
The chanter's soul and raptur'd song inspire;

V. 443. *Oft', Jove's ethereal rays, &c.*] Telemachus here reproves his mother for commanding Phœmius to desist, or not to make Ulysses the subject of his song: by saying, that it was not in the poet's own power to choose his subject, which was frequently dictated and inspired by the gods. This is a particular instance of the opinion the ancients held as to the immediate inspiration of their poets. The words in the original evidently bear this sense. 'If the subject displease you, it is not the poet, but Jupiter is to blame, who inspires men of invention, as he himself pleases.' And madam Dacier strangely mistakes this passage, in rendering it, 'it is not the poet, but Jupiter, who is the cause of our misfortunes, for it is he who dispenses to wretched mortals good or evil as he pleases.' At the same time she acknowledges the word *αλφειραι*, which she here renders, laborious, or wretched, to signify persons of wit, in the beginning of lib. vi. and persons of skill and ability in their art, in lib. xiii.

Instinct divine! nor blame severe his choice, 445
 Warbling the Grecian woes with harp and voice:
 For novel lays attract our ravish'd ears;
 But old, the mind with inattention hears;
 Patient permit the sadly-pleasing strain;
 Familiar now with grief, your tears refrain, 450
 And in the public woe forget your own;
 You weep not for a perish'd lord, alone.
 What Grecks, now wand'ring in the Stygian gloom,
 With your Ulysses shar'd an equal doom!
 Your widow'd hours, apart, with female toil 455
 And various labours of the loom, beguile;
 There rule, from palace-cares remote and free,
 That care to man belongs, and most to me.

Mature beyond his years the queen admires
 His sage reply, and with her train retires. 460
 Then swelling sorrows burst their former bounds,
 With echoing grief afresh the dome resounds;

V. 455. *Your widow'd hours, apart, with female toil, &c.*] These verses are taken literally from the sixth book of the Iliad, except that *μυθος* is inserted instead of *πολεμος*; Eustathius explains the *μυθος* thus: 'Women are not forbid entirely to speak, for women are talking animals, *λαλητρον ζων*, they have the faculty of talking, and indeed are rational creatures; but they must not give too much liberty to that unruly member, in the company of men.' Sophocles advises well,

Γυναῖ, γυναῖξί κοσμον ἡ σιὴ φέρει.

'O woman, silence is the ornament of thy sex.' Madam Dacier, though she plunders almost every thing, has spared this observation.

Till Pallas, piteous of her plaintive cries,
In slumber clos'd her silver-streaming eyes.

Meantime, rekindled at the royal charms, 465
Tumultuous love each beating bosom warms;
Intemp'rate rage a wordy war began;
But bold Telemachus assum'd the man.

Instant (he cry'd) your female discord end,
Ye deedless boasters! and the song attend; 470
Obey that sweet compulsion, nor profane
With dissonance the smooth melodious strain.

Pacific now prolong the jovial feast;
But when the dawn reveals the rosy east,
I, to the peers assembled, shall propose 475
The firm resolve, I here in few disclose.

No longer live the cankers of my court;
All to your several states with speed resort;
Waste in wild riot what your land allows,
There ply the early feast, and late carouse. 480

But if, to honour lost, 'tis still decreed
For you my bowl shall flow, my flock shall bleed;

~~Judge~~ and revenge my right, impartial Jove!—

By him and all th' immortal thrones above,
(A sacred oath) each proud oppressor, slain, 485
Shall with inglorious gore this marble stain.

Aw'd by the prince, thus haughty, bold, and young,
Rage gnaw'd the lip, and wonder chain'd the tongue.
Silence at length the gay Antinous broke,
Constrain'd a smile, and thus ambiguous spoke. 490

What god to your untutor'd youth affords
 This headlong torrent of amazing words?
 May Jove delay thy reign, and cumber late
 So bright a genius with the toils of state!

V. 491. *The speech of Antinous.*] Antinous and Eurymachus are Ithacensians, and are called the chief of the suitors. It is therefore necessary to distinguish their character; Antinous is violent, and determined against Ulysses; Eurymachus more gentle and subtle; Antinous derides, Eurymachus flatters.

This speech of Antinous is a concealed raillery; he tells Telemachus, that Jove inspires his soul with wisdom, but means that his education has been such, that he had learned nothing from man; he wishes (out of a seemingly kind concern for him) that he may never reign in Ithaca, because the weight of a crown is a burden; and concludes with mentioning his hereditary title to it, to insinuate that it is his by descent only, and not by merit.

Telemachus, in his answer, wisely dissembles the affront of Antinous, he takes it in the better sense, and seems to differ only in opinion about the regality. Think you, says he, that to be a king is to be miserable? To be a king, in my judgment, is to enjoy affluence and honour. He asserts his claim to the succession of his father, yet seems to decline it, to lay the suspicions of the suitors asleep, that they may not prevent the measures he takes to obtain it. EUSTATHIUS.

The speech of Eurymachus confirms the former observation, that this suitor is of a more soft and moderate behaviour than Antinous: he clothes ill designs with a seeming humanity, and appears a friend, while he carries on the part of an enemy: Telemachus had said, that if it was the will of Jupiter, he would ascend the throne of Ithaca: Eurymachus answers, that this was as the gods should determine; an insinuation that they regarded not his claim from his father. Telemachus said he would maintain himself in the possession of his present inheritance: Eurymachus wishes that no one may arrive to dispossess him: the latent meaning of which is, 'we of your own country are sufficient for that design.' If these observations of Eustathius be true, Eurymachus was not a less enemy than Antinous, but a better dissembler.

Book I. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 45

Those toils (Telemachus serene replies) 495
 Have charms, with all their weight, t' allure the wise.
 Fast by the throne obsequious Fame resides,
 And Wealth incessant rolls her golden tides.
 Nor let Antinous rage, if strong desire
 Of wealth and fame a youthful bosom fire: 500
 Elect by Jove his delegate of sway,
 With joyous pride the summons I'd obey.
 When'er Ulysses roams the realm of night,
 Should factious pow'r dispute my lineal right,
 Some other Greeks a fairer claim may plead; 505
 To your pretence their title would precede.
 At least, the sceptre lost, I still should reign
 Sole o'er my vassals, and domestic train.

To this Eurymachus. To heav'n alone
 Refer the choice to fill the vacant throne. 510
 Your patrimonial stores in peace possess;
 Undoubted all your filial claim confess:
 Your private right should impious pow'r invade,
 The peers of Ithaca would arm in aid. 514

~~He~~ say, that stranger-guest who late withdrew,
 What and from whence? his name and lineage shew.
 His grave demeanour, and majestic grace
 Speak him descended of no vulgar race:
 Did he some loan of ancient right require,
 Or came forerunner of your scepter'd sire? 520

Oh son of Polybus! the prince replies,
 No more my sire will glad these longing eyes:

The queen's fond hope inventive rumour cheers,
 Or vain diviners' dreams divert her fears.
 That stranger-guest the Taphian realm obeys, 525
 A realm defended with encircling seas.
 Mentès, an ever-honour'd name, of old
 High in Ulysses' social list enroll'd.

Thus he, though conscious of th' ethereal guest,
 Answer'd evasive of the sly request. 530
 Meantime the lyre rejoins the sprightly lay;
 Love-dittied airs, and dance, conclude the day.
 But when the star of eve, with golden light
 Adorn'd the matron-brow of sable night;
 The mirthful train dispersing quit the court, 535
 And to their several domes to rest resort.
 A tow'ring structure to the palace join'd;
 To this his steps the thoughtful prince inclin'd;
 In his pavilion there, to sleep repairs;
 The lighted torch, the sage Euryclæa bears: 540

V. 540. *The sage Euryclæa.*] Euryclæa was a very aged person; she was bought by Laertes to nurse Ulysses; and in her old age attends Telemachus: she cost Laertes twenty oxen; that is, a certain quantity of money (*ὀλῆς μετ' ἀλλήλης*) which would buy twenty oxen: or perhaps the form of an ox was stamped upon the metal, and from thence had its appellation.

The simplicity of these heroic times is remarkable; an old woman is the only attendant upon the son of a king: she lights him to his apartment, takes care of his clothes, and hangs them up at the side of his bed. Greatness then consisted not in shew, but in the mind: this conduct proceeded not from the meanness of poverty, but from the simplicity of manners, EUSTATHIUS.

(Daughter of Ops, the just Pisenor's son,
 For twenty beeves by great Laertes won;
 In rosy prime with charms attractive grac'd,
 Honour'd by him, a gentle lord and chaste,
 With dear esteem: too wise, with jealous strife 545
 To taint the joys of sweet, connubial life.
 Sole with Telemachus her service ends,
 A child she nurs'd him, and a man attends.)
 Whilst to his couch himself the prince address,
 The duteous dame receiv'd the purple vest: 550
 The purple vest with decent care dispos'd,
 The silver ring she pull'd, the door reclos'd;
 The bolt, obedient to the silken cord,
 To the strong staple's inmost depth restor'd,
 Secur'd the valves. There, wrapt in silent shade, 555
 Pensive, the rules the goddess gave, he weigh'd;
 Stretch'd on the downy fleece, no rest he knows,
 And in his raptur'd soul the vision glows.

Having now gone through the first book, I shall only observe to the reader, that the whole of it does not take up the compass of an ~~entire~~ day: when Minerva appears to Telemachus, the suitors were preparing to sit down to the banquet at noon; and the business of the first book concludes with the day. It is true, that the gods hold a debate before the descent of Minerva, and some small time must be allowed for that transaction. It is remarkable, that there is not one simile in this book, except we allow those three words to be one, *οἷος δ' ὡς ἀνταῖα*; the same observation is true of the first book of the Iliad. See the notes on that place.

THE
SECOND BOOK
OF THE
ODYSSEY.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE COUNCIL OF ITHACA.

TELEMACHUS, in the assembly of the lords of Ithaca, complains of the injustice done him by the suitors, and insists upon their departure from his palace; appealing to the princes, and exciting the people to declare against them. The suitors endeavour to justify their stay, at least till he shall send the queen to the court of Icarus her father; which he refuses. There appears a prodigy of two eagles in the sky, which an augur expounds to the ruin of the suitors. Telemachus then demands a vessel to carry him to Pylos and Sparta, there to inquire of his father's fortunes. Pallas in the shape of Mentor (an ancient friend of Ulysses) helps him to a ship, assists him in preparing necessaries for the voyage, and embarks with him that night; which concludes the second day from the opening of the Poem.

The Scene continues in the Palace of Ulysses in Ithaca.

THE
ODYSSEY.

BOOK II. *

Now red'ning from the dawn, the morning ray
Glow'd in the front of heav'n, and gave the day.
The youthful hero, with returning light,
Rose anxious from th' inquietudes of night.

* This book opens with the first appearance of Telemachus upon the stage of action. And Bossu observes the great judgment of the poet, in beginning with the transactions of Ithaca in the absence of Ulysses: by this method he sets the conduct of Telemachus, Penelope, and the suitors, in a strong point of light; they all have a large share in the story of the poem, and consequently ought to have distinguishing characters. It is as necessary in epic poetry, as it is on the theatre, to let us immediately into the character of every person whom the poet introduces: this adds perspicuity to the story, and we immediately grow acquainted with each personage, and interest ourselves in the good or ill fortune that attends them through the whole relation.

Telemachus is now about twenty years of age: in the eleventh book, the poet tells us, he was an infant in the arms of his mother when Ulysses sailed to Troy; that hero was absent near twenty years, and from hence we may gather the exact age of Telemachus. He is every where described as a person of piety to the gods, of duty to his parents, and as a lover of his country: he is prudent, temperate, and

A royal robe he wore with graceful pride, 5
 A two-edg'd falchion threaten'd by his side,
 Embroider'd sandals glitter'd as he trod,
 And forth he mov'd, majestic as a god.
 Then by his heralds, restless of delay,
 To council calls the peers: the peers obey. 10
 Soon as in solemn form th' assembly sat,
 From his high dome himself descends in state.
 Bright in his hand a pond'rous jav'lin shin'd;
 Two dogs, a faithful guard, attend behind;

valiant: and the poet well sets off the importance of this young hero, by giving him the goddess of war and wisdom for his constant attendant.

V. 13. — *In his hand a pond'rous jav'lin shin'd.*] The poet describes Telemachus as if he were marching against an enemy, or going to a council of war, rather than to an assembly of peers in his own country: two reasons are assigned for this conduct; either this was the common usage of princes in those times, or Telemachus might look upon the suitors as enemies, and consequently go to council in arms as against enemies. EUSTATIUS:

V. 14. *Two dogs, a faithful guard, attend behind.*] This passage has not escaped the raillery of the critics; they look upon it as a mean description of a hero and a prince, to give him a brace of dogs only for his guards or attendants: but such was the simplicity of ancient princes, that except in war they had rarely any attendants or equipage. And we may be confident Homer copies after the custom of the time, unless we can be so absurd as to suppose, he would feign low circumstances unnecessarily, through a want of judgment.

Virgil judged otherwise, and thought this circumstance worthy of his imitation.

' Quin etiam gemini custodes limine ab alto
 Procedunt, gressumque canes comitantur Herilem.'

Book II. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 53

Pallas with grace divine his form improves, 15
And gazing crowds admire him as he moves.

His father's throne he fill'd: while distant stood
The hoary peers, and aged Wisdom bow'd.

'Twas silence all, at last Ægyptius spoke;
Ægyptius, by his age and sorrows broke: 20

A length of days his soul with prudence crown'd,
A length of days had bent him to the ground.

His eldest * hope in arms to Ilion came,

By great Ulysses taught the path to fame;

But (hapless youth) the hideous Cyclops tore 25

His quiv'ring limbs, and quaff'd his spouting gore.

Three sons remain'd: to climb with haughty fires

The royal bed, Eurynomus aspires;

The rest with duteous love his griefs assuage,

And ease the sire of half the cares of age. 30

Patroclus is described in the Iliad with the same attendants.

— nine large dogs domestic at his board. B. xxiii.

Poetry, observes Dacier, is like painting, which draws the greatest beauties from the simplest customs: and even in history, we receive a sensible pleasure from the least circumstance that denotes the customs of ancient times. It may be added, that the poet, as well as the painter, is obliged to follow the customs of the age of which he writes, or paints: a modern dress would ill become Achilles or Ulysses; such a conduct would be condemned as an absurdity in painting, and ought to be so in poetry.

* Antiphus.

Yet still his Antiphus he loves, he mourns,
And as he stood, he spoke and wept by turns.

Since great Ulysses sought the Phrygian plains,
Within these walls inglorious silence reigns.

V. 31. *Yet still his Antiphus he loves, he mourns.*] Homer, says Eustathius, inserts these particularities concerning the family of Ægyptius, to give an air of truth to his story: it does not appear that Ægyptius knew the certainty of the death of Antiphus; (for it is the poet who relates it, and not the father;) whence, as Dacier observes, should he learn it? He only laments him, according to the prevailing opinion that all the companions of Ulysses were lost with Ulysses.

V. 33. *Since great Ulysses, &c.*] We here are told, that there never had been any council convened in Ithaca, since the departure of Ulysses. The general design and moral of the *Odyssey*, is to inform us of the mischievous effects which the absence of a king and father of a family produces: we deprive, as Bossu observes, the poem of its very soul, and spoil the fable, if we retrench from it the disorders which the suitors create in the absence of Ulysses, both in his family and dominions. Nothing can give us a greater image of those disorders, than what is here related: what must a kingdom suffer in twenty years without a ruler, without a council to make laws or punish enormities? Such is the condition of Ithaca: Laertes is superannuated; Penelope oppressed by the violence of the suitors; and Telemachus to this time, in his minority.

It is very artful in the poet to open the assembly by Ægyptius: Telemachus was the person who convened it: and being the greatest personage present, it might be expected that he should open the design of it: but to give Telemachus courage, who was young and inexperienced, Ægyptius first rises, and by praising the person who had summoned them (of whom he seems ignorant) gives Telemachus to understand he has friends among the assembly: this he could no other way so safely have done, considering the power of the suitors. By this means Telemachus is encouraged to speak boldly, and arraign the disorders of the suitors with the utmost freedom.

Say then, ye peers! by whose commands we meet?
 Why here once more in solemn council sit? 36
 Ye young, ye old, the weighty cause disclose:
 Arrives some message of invading foes?
 Or say, does high necessity of state
 Inspire some patriot, and demand debate! 40
 The present synod speaks its author wise;
 Assist him, Jove, thou regent of the skies!

He spoke. Telemachus with transport glows,
 Embrac'd the omen, and majestic rose:
 (His royal hand th' imperial sceptre sway'd) 45
 Then thus, addressing to Ægyptius, said.

Rev'rend old man! lo here confest he stands
 By whom ye meet; my grief your care demands.
 No story I unfold of public woes,
 Nor bear advices of impending foes: 50
 Peace the blest land, and joys incessant crown;
 Of all this happy realm, I grieve alone.
 For my lost sire continual sorrows spring,
 The great, the good; your father, and your king.

* V. 54. *Your father, and your king.*] Telemachus here sets the character of Ulysses, as a king, in the most agreeable point of light: he ruled his people with the same mildness as a father rules his children. This must needs have a very happy effect upon the audience; not only as it shews Ulysses to have been a good governor; but as it recalls the memory of the happiness they received from that mild government, and obliquely condemns them of ingratitude who had forgot it. By this method also the poet interests us deeply in the sufferings of Ulysses; we cannot see a good man and good king in distress, without the most tender emotions.

Yet more; our house from its foundation bows, 55
 Our foes are pow'ful, and your sons the foes;
 Hither, unwelcome to the queen they come;
 Why seek they not the rich Icarian dome?
 If she must wed, from other hands require
 The dow'ry: is Telemachus her sire? 60
 Yet through my court the noise of revel rings,
 And wastes the wise frugality of kings.
 Scarce all my herds their luxury suffice;
 Scarce all my wine their midnight hours supplies.

V. 55. *Yet more; our house, &c.*] What Telemachus here says, has given offence to the critics; they think it indecent for a son to say, that he bears with more regret the disorder of his family than the loss of his father; yet this objection will vanish, if we weigh Penelope, Telemachus, and his whole posterity, against the single person of Ulysses.

But what chiefly takes away this objection is, that Telemachus was still in hopes of his father's return: for *αυωλεσα* does not imply necessarily his death, but absence: and then both with justice and decency, Telemachus may say that he grieves more for the destruction of his family, than for the absence of Ulysses.

V. 63. *Scarce all my herds their luxury suffice.*] This passage is ridiculed by the critics; they set it in a wrong light, and then grow very pleasant upon it: Telemachus makes a sad outcry because the suitors eat his sheep, his bees and fatted goats; and at last falls into tears. The truth is, the riches of kings and princes, in those early ages, consisted chiefly in flocks and cattle; thus Æneas and Paris are described as tending their flocks, &c. and Abraham in the scriptures, as abounding in this kind of wealth.

These critics would form a different idea of the state and condition of Telemachus, if they considered that he had been capable to maintain no fewer than an hundred and eight persons in a manner very expensive for many years; for so many (with their attendants)

Safe in my youth, in riot still they grow, 65
 Nor in the helpless orphan dread a foe.
 But come it will, the time when manhood grants
 More pow'rful advocates than vain complaints.
 Approach that hour! unsufferable wrong
 Cries to the gods, and vengeance sleeps too long.
 Rise then, ye peers! with virtuous anger rise; 71
 Your fame revere, but most th' avenging skies.
 By all the deathless pow'rs that reign above,
 By righteous Themis and by thund'ring Jove,
 (Themis, who gives to councils, or denies 75
 Success; and humbles, or confirms the wise)

were the suitors, as appears from the sixteenth book: and at the same time he kept up the dignity of his own court, and lived with great hospitality.

But it is a sufficient answer to the objections against this passage, to observe, that it is not the expence, but manner of it, that Telemachus laments: this he expressly declares by the word *μαψιδως*; and surely a sober man may complain against luxury, without being arraigned of meanness; and against profusion, without being condemned for parsimony.

V. 75. *Themis, who gives to councils, or denies
 Success; ———]*

Eustathius observes, that there was a custom to carry the statue of Themis to the assemblies in former ages, and carry it back again when those assemblies were dissolved; and thus Themis may be said to form, and dissolve an assembly. Dacier dislikes this assertion, as having no foundation in antiquity; she thinks that the assertion of Telemachus is general, that he intimates, it is justice alone that establishes the councils of mankind, and that injustice confounds and brings the wicked designs of men to confusion.

Rise in my aid! suffice the tears that flow
 For my lost sire, nor add new woe to woe.
 If e'er he bore the sword to strengthen ill,
 Or having pow'r to wrong, betray'd the will, 80
 On me, on me your kindled wrath assuage,
 And bid the voice of lawless riot rage.
 If ruin to our royal race ye doom,
 Be you the spoilers, and our wealth consume.
 Then might we hope redress from juster laws, 85
 And raise all Ithaca to aid our cause:
 But while your sons commit th' unpunish'd wrong,
 You make the arm of violence too strong.

While thus he spoke, with rage and grief he frown'd,
 And dash'd th' imperial sceptre to the ground. 90
 The big round tear hung trembling in his eye:
 The synod griev'd, and gave a pitying sigh,

I have followed this interpretation, not only as it suits best with the usual morality of Homer, but also as Jupiter is mentioned with *Thenis*; and no such custom is pretended concerning his statue. He is expressly styled by the ancients *Zeus ἀγορασιος*. In Sicily there was an altar of *Zeus ἀγορασιος*, or of 'Jupiter who presides over councils.' EUSTATHIUS from HERODOTUS.

V. 84. *Be you the spoilers, and our wealth consume.*] To understand this passage, we must remember, as Eustathius remarks, that Telemachus is pleading his cause before the Ithacensians; then he constitutes the judges of his cause: he therefore prevents an answer which they might make, viz. 'We are not the men that are guilty of these outrages;' Telemachus rejoins, 'It were better for me to suffer from your hands; for by your quiescence you make my affairs desperate;' an intimation that they should rise in his defence.

V. 91. *The big round tear hung trembling in his eye.*] This passage

Then silent sat—at length Antinous burns
With haughty rage, and sternly thus returns.

O insolence of youth! whose tongue affords 95
Such railing eloquence, and war of words.
Studious thy country's worthies to defame,
Thy erring voice displays thy mother's shame.
Elusive of the bridal day, she gives
Fond hopes to all, and all with hopes deceives. 100

is not one of those, where the poet can be blamed for causing a hero to weep. If we consider the youth of Telemachus, together with the tenderness agreeable to that time of life; the subjects that demand his concern; the apprehension of the loss of a father; and the desolate state of his mother and kingdom: all these make his readiness to burst into tears an argument, not of any want of spirit in him, but of true sense, and goodness of nature; and is a great propriety, which shews the right judgment of the poet.

V. 95. *O insolence of youth! &c.*] We find Antinous always setting himself in the strongest opposition to Telemachus; and therefore he is the first that falls by the spear of Ulysses; the poet observes justice, and as Antinous is the first in guilt, he is the first in punishment. What Antinous says in this speech, concerning the treachery of the female servant of Penelope, prepares the way for the punishment Ulysses inflicts on some of the maids in the conclusion of the poem: this is an act of poetical justice; and it is as necessary in epic as in tragic poetry, to reward the just, and punish the guilty. EUSTATHIUS.

V. 99. *Elusive of the bridal day, she gives
Fond hopes to all, and all with hopes deceives.*]

It will be necessary to vindicate the character of Penelope, the heroine of the poem, from the aspersion of Antinous. It must be confessed that she has a very hard game to play, she neither dares consent, nor deny; if she consent, she injures Ulysses, whom she still expects to return; if she deny, she endangers the throne, and the life of Tele-

Did not the sun, through heav'n's wide azure roll'd,
 For three long years the royal fraud behold?
 While she, laborious in delusion spread
 The spacious loom, and mix'd the various thread:
 Where as to life the wond'rous figures rise, 105
 Thus spoke th' inventive queen, with artful sighs.
 ' Though cold in death Ulysses breathes no more,
 Cease yet a while to urge the bridal hour;
 Cease, till to great Laërtes I bequeath
 A task of grief, his ornaments of death. 110

machus, from the violence of the suitors; so that no other method is left to elude their addresses.

I must not conceal what Eustathius has mentioned from some authors, as Lycophron, &c. who say that Penelope was *κατωριδα*, in plain English, an harlot: and he quotes Herodotus, as affirming that she had a son, named Pan, by Ifermus; but the bishop declares it is all a scandal; and every body must conclude the same, from her conduct, as described in Homer.

To vindicate her in this place, we must consider who it is that speaks: Antinous, an unsuccessful lover: and what he blames as a crime, is really her glory; he blames her because she does not comply with their desires; and it had been an act of guilt to have complied. He himself sufficiently vindicates her in the conclusion of his speech, where he extols her above all the race of womankind: so that the seeming inconsistency of Penelope, must be imputed to the necessity of her affairs: she is artful, but not criminal.

The original says, she deceived the suitors by her messages; a plain intimation, that she used no extraordinary familiarities with her admirers, and through the whole course of the poem she seldom appears in their assemblies.

V. 109. *Cease, till to great Laërtes I bequeath
 A task of grief, his ornaments of death.*]

It was an ancient custom to dedicate the finest pieces of weaving and

Lest when the Fates his royal ashes claim,
 The Grecian matrons taint my spotless fame;
 When he, whom living mighty realms obey'd,
 Shall want in death a shroud to grace his shade.*

Thus she: at once the gen'rous train complies, 115
 Nor fraud mistrusts in virtue's fair disguise.
 The work she ply'd; but studious of delay,
 By night revers'd the labours of the day.
 While thrice the sun his annual journey made,
 The conscious lamp the midnight fraud survey'd; 120
 Unheard, unseen, three years her arts prevail;
 The fourth, her maid unfolds th' amazing tale.
 We saw, as unperceiv'd we took our stand,
 The backward labours of her faithless hand.
 Then urg'd, she perfects her illustrious toils; 125
 A wond'rous monument of female wiles!

But you, oh peers! and thou, oh prince! give ear
 (I speak aloud, that every Greek may hear)

embroidery, to honour the funerals of the dead: and these were usually wrought by the nearest relations in their life-time. Thus in the twenty-second Iliad, Andromache laments that the body of Hector must be exposed to the air, without those ornaments.

— ἀλλὰ τοὶ εἰμάρ' ἐνὶ μεγάροισι κενεῖσθαι,
 Δεσφὰς τε καὶ χαρίεντα, τέλει μὲν χερσὶ γυναικῶν.

And the mother of Euryalus in Virgil, to her son.

' — — — Nec te tua funera mater
 Produxi, pressive oculos, aut vulnera lavi,
 Veste tegens, tibi quam noctes festina diesque,
 Urgebam, et tela curas solabar aniles.'

Dismiss the queen; and if her sire approves,
Let him espouse her to the peer she loves: 130
Bid instant to prepare the bridal train,
Nor let a race of princes wait in vain.
Though with a grace divine her soul is blest,
And all Minerva breathes within her breast,
In wond'rous arts than woman more renown'd, 135
And more than woman with deep wisdom crown'd;
Though Tyro nor Mycenc match her name,
Nor great Alcmena (the proud boasts of fame)
Yet thus by heav'n adorn'd, by heav'n's decree
She shines with fatal excellence, to thee: 140
With thee, the bowl we drain, indulge the feast,
Till righteous heav'n reclaim her stubborn breast.
What though from pole to pole resounds her name!
The son's destruction waits the mother's fame:
For till she leaves thy court, it is decreed, 145
Thy bowl to empty, and thy flock to bleed.

While yet he speaks, Telemachus replies.
Ev'n Nature starts, and what ye ask denies.

V. 140. *She shines with fatal excellence to thee.*] Eustathius observes, that Antinous, in the opening of his speech, throws the fault upon Penelope, to engage the favour of the multitude: but being conscious that he had said things which Penelope would resent, he extols her in the conclusion of it. He ascribes an obstinacy of virtue to her, and by this double conduct endeavours to make both Penelope and the multitude his friends.

V. 147. *Telemachus's reply.*] Telemachus every where speaks with an openness and bravery of spirit; this speech is a testimony of it, as well as his former; he answers chiefly to the dismissal of

Thus, shall I thus repay a mother's cares,
Who gave me life, and nurs'd my infant years? 150

Penelope, says it would be an offence against heaven and earth; and concludes with a vehemence of expression, and tells Antinous that such a word, *μῶλον*, shall never fall from his tongue.

The critics have found fault with one part of the speech, as betraying a spirit of avarice and meanness in Telemachus.

How to Icarus, in the bridal hour,
Shall I, by waste undone, refund the dow'r?

They think it unworthy of Telemachus to make the dower of Penelope an argument against her dismissal, and consequently ascribe his detention of her, not to duty, but to covetousness. To take away this objection, they point the verses in a different manner, and place a stop after *ἀπέρριψεν*, and then the sense runs thus; 'I cannot consent to dismiss her who bore me, and nursed me in my infancy, while her husband is absent, or perhaps dead; besides, hard would be the punishment I should suffer, if I should voluntarily send away Penelope to Icarus.'

Dacier dislikes this solution, and appeals to the customs of those ages, to justify her opinion: if a son forced away his mother from his house, he was obliged to restore her dower, and all she brought in marriage to her husband: but if she retired voluntarily to engage in a second marriage, the dower remained with the son as lawful heir. This opinion of Dacier may be confirmed from Demosthenes in his orations, *καὶ μὲν τὰ τευτα, ἀνδρὸς αὐτῆς τελευτήσαντος, ἀπολιπὼσα τὸν οἶκον, καὶ κομισαμένη τὴν προίκα.* 'Afterwards upon the decease of her husband, leaving his family, and receiving back her portion, &c.' The same author adds, that the reason why the suitors are so urgent to send away Penelope, is, that she may choose to marry some one of them, rather than return to Icarus; so that Telemachus only takes hold of the argument for her dismissal, in order to detain her. They addressed Penelope more for the sake of her riches than her beauty (for she must be about forty years old), and he tells them, that if he send her away against her consent, he must restore those riches, which they covet more than the person of Penelope. This I

While sad on foreign shores Ulysses treads
 Or glides a ghost with unapparent shades;
 How to Icarius in the bridal hour
 Shall I, by waste undone, refund the dow'r?
 How from my father should I vengeance dread? 155
 How would my mother curse my hated head?
 And while in wrath to vengeful fiends she cries,
 How from their hell would vengeful fiends arise?

confess is very refined; and perhaps it may be sufficient to take off the objection of covetousness in Telemachus, to understand no more than what the words at the first view seem to imply, viz. an abhorrence of their riots, described by Telemachus to have arisen to such a degree as to have almost ruined his kingdom, and made their demands impossible. I see nothing unnatural or mean in this interpretation, especially if we remember that the prodigious disorders of his family enter into the essence of the poem. The greater the disorders are, the greater are the sufferings of Ulysses.

V. 155. *How from my father should I vengeance dread?*] There is an ambiguity in the word father; it may either signify Icarius or Ulysses, as Eustathius observes: but I think the context determines the person of Ulysses; for Telemachus believes him to be yet living, and consequently might fear his vengeance, if he offered any indignity to Penelope.

V. 157. *And while in wrath to vengeful fiends she cries,
 How from their hell would vengeful fiends arise?*

In the ninth Iliad we are told that the father of Phoenix imprecated the furies against his son.

My sire with curses loads my hated head.
 And cries, ' Ye furies! barren be his bed.'
 Infernal Jove, the vengeful fiends below,
 And ruthless Proserpine, confirm'd his vow.

In the same book the furies hear the curses of Althea upon her son,

Abhorr'd by all, accurs'd my name would grow,
 The earth's disgrace, and humankind my foe. 160
 If this displease, why urge ye here your stay?
 Haste from the court, ye spoilers, haste away :
 Waste in wild riot what your land allows,
 There ply the early feast, and late carouse.
 But if, to honour lost, 'tis still decreed 165
 For you my bowl shall flow, my flocks shall bleed ;
 Judge and assert my right, impartial Jove!
 By him, and all th' immortal host above,
 (A sacred oath) if heav'n the pow'r supply,
 Vengeance I vow, and for your wrongs ye die. 170
 With that, two eagles from a mountain's height
 By Jove's command direct their rapid flight ;

She beat the ground, and call'd the pow'rs beneath,
 On her own son to wreak her brother's death.
 Hell heard her curses from the realms profound,
 And the fell fiends who walk the nightly round.

These passages shew the opinion the ancients had of the honour due from children to parents, to be such, that they believed there were furies particularly commissioned to punish those who failed in that respect, and to fulfil the imprecations made against them by their offended parents. There is a greatness in this idea, and it must have had an effect upon the obedience of the youth. We see Telemachus is full of the sense of it. Dacier.

Ver. 171, &c. *The prodigy of the two eagles.*] This prodigy is ushered in very magnificently, and the verses are lofty and sonorous. The eagles are Ulysses and Telemachus: 'By Jove's command they fly from a mountain's height:' this denotes that the two heroes are inspired by Jupiter, and come from the country to the destruction of the suitors: the eagles fly 'with wing to wing conjoin'd;' this shews,

Swift they descend, with wing to wing conjoin'd,
 Stretch their broad plumes, and float upon the wind.
 Above th' assembled peers they wheel on high, 175
 And clang their wings, and hov'ring beat the sky;
 With ardent eyes the rival train they threat,
 And shrieking loud, denounce approaching fate.
 They cuff, they tear; their checks and neck they rend,
 And from their plumes huge drops of blood descend:
 Then sailing o'er the domes and tow'rs, they fly 181
 Full tow'rd the east, and mount into the sky.

The wond'ring rivals gaze with cares opprest,
 And chilling horrors freeze in ev'ry breast.
 Till big with knowledge of approaching woes 185
 The prince of augurs, Halitherses, rose:
 Prescient he view'd th' aërial tracks, and drew
 A sure presage from ev'ry wing that flew.

that they act in concert and unity of counsels: at first they 'float upon the wind;' this implies the calmness and secrecy of the approach of those heroes: at last they 'clang their wings, and hovering beat the skies;' this shews the violence of the assault: 'with ardent eyes the rival train they threat.' This, as the poet himself interprets it, denotes the approaching fate of the suitors. 'Then sailing o'er the domes and tow'rs they fly, Full tow'rd the east;' this signifies that the suitors alone are not doomed to destruction, but that the men of Ithaca are involved in danger, as Halitherses interprets it.

Nor to the great alone is death decreed;
 'We, and our guilty Ithaca must bleed.

See here the natural explication of this prodigy, which is very ingenious! EUSTATHIUS, verbatim.

Ye sons (he cry'd) of Ithaca, give ear,
 Hear all! but chiefly you, oh rivals! hear. 190
 Destruction sure o'er all your heads impends;
 Ulysses comes, and death his steps attends.
 Nor to the great alone is death decreed;
 We, and our guilty Ithaca must bleed.
 Why cease we then the wrath of Heav'n to stay? 195
 Be humbled all, and lead, ye great! the way.
 For lo! my words no fancy'd woes relate:
 I speak from science, and the voice is fate.

When great Ulysses sought the Phrygian shores
 To shake with war proud Ilion's lofty tow'rs, 200
 Deeds then undone my faithful tongue foretold:
 Heav'n seal'd my words, and you those deeds behold.
 I see (I cry'd) his woes, a countless train;
 I see his friends o'erwhelm'd beneath the main;

V. 203. *I see (I cry'd) his woes* ———

I see his friends o'erwhelm'd, &c.]

In three lines (observes Eustathius) the poet gives us the whole *Odyssey* in miniature: and it is wonderful to think, that so plain a subject should produce such variety in the process of it. Aristotle observes the simplicity of Homer's platform; which is no more than this: a prince is absent from his country. Neptune destroys his companions; in his absence his family is disordered by many princes that address his wife, and plot against the life of his only son; but at last after many storms he returns, punishes the suitors, and re-establishes his affairs: this is all that is essential to the poem, the rest of it is made up of episodes. And yet with what miracles of poetry (speciosa miracula, as Horace styles them) has he furnished out his poem?

How twice ten years from shore to shore he roams; 205
Now twice ten years are past, and now he comes!

To whom Eurymachus. Fly, dotard, fly!
With thy wise dreams, and fables of the sky.
Go prophesy at home; thy sons advise:
Here thou art sage in vain — I better read the skies. 210
Unnumber'd birds glide through th' aërial way,
Vagrants of air, and unforeboding stray.
Cold in the tomb, or in the deeps below
Ulysses lies: oh wert thou laid as low!
Then would that busy head no broils suggest, 215
Nor fire to rage Telemachus's breast.
From him some bribe thy venal tongue requires,
And int'rest, not the god, thy voice inspires.
His guideless youth, if thy experienc'd age
Miscad fallacious into idle rage, 220
Vengeance deserv'd thy malice shall repress,
And but augment the wrongs thou wouldst redress.
Telemachus may bid the queen repair
To great Icarius, whose paternal care

V. 207. *The speech of Eurymachus.*] It has been observed, that Homer is the father of oratory as well as poetry, and it must be confessed, that there is not any one branch of it, that is not to be found in his poetry. The invective, persuasive, ironical, &c. may all be gathered from it. Nothing can be better adapted to the purpose than this speech of Eurymachus: he is to decry the credit of the predictions of Halitherses: he derides, he threatens, and describes him as a venal prophet. He is speaking to the multitude, and endeavours to bring Halitherses into contempt, and in order to it he uses him contemptuously.

Will guide her passion, and reward her choice, 225
 With wealthy dow'r, and bridal gifts of price.
 Till she retires, determin'd we remain,
 And both the prince and augur threat in vain :
 His pride of words, and thy wild dream of fate,
 Move not the brave, or only move their hate. 230
 Threat on, oh prince! elude the bridal day,
 Threat on, till all thy stores in waste decay.
 True, Greece affords a train of lovely dames,
 In wealth and beauty worthy of our flames :
 But never from this nobler suit we cease; 235
 For wealth and beauty less than virtue please.

To whom the youth. Since then in vain I tell
 My num'rous woes, in silence let them dwell.
 But heav'n, and all the Greeks, have heard my wrongs :
 To heav'n, and all the Greeks, redress belongs. 240

V. 239. — *All the Greeks have heard my wrongs.*] It is necessary for the reader to carry in his mind, that this assembly consists not only of the peers, but of the people of Ithaca: for to the people Telemachus here appeals.

It is evident, that the place of the assembly was at least open to the air in the upper parts: for otherways how should the eagles be visible to the suitors? and so very plainly, as to be discovered to threat them with their eyes? There was no doubt a place set apart for counsel, usually in the market: for Telemachus is said to seat himself in his father's throne, in the beginning of this book: but Ulysses had been absent twenty years; and therefore it is evident, that his throne had stood in the same place for the space of twenty years. It is past contradiction, that in Athens, and other cities of Greece, there were *Βουλευτήρια*, public halls for the consultation of affairs.

Yet this I ask (nor be it ask'd in vain)
 A bark to waft me o'er the rolling main;
 The realms of Pyle and Sparta to explore,
 And seek my royal sire from shore to shore:
 If, or to fame his doubtful fate be known, 245
 Or to be learn'd from oracles alone?
 If yet he lives; with patience I forbear,
 Till the fleet hours restore the circling year:
 But if already wand'ring in the train
 Of empty shades; I measure back the main, 250
 Plant the fair column o'er the mighty dead,
 And yield his consort to the nuptial bed.

He ceas'd; and while abash'd the peers attend,
 Mentor arose, Ulysses' faithful friend: 254
 [When fierce in arms he sought the scenes of war,
 'My friend (he cry'd) my palace be thy care;
 Years roll'd on years my god-like sire decay,
 Guard thou his age, and his behests obey.']

V. 254. *Mentor arose, Ulysses' faithful friend.*] The name of Mentor is another instance of the gratitude of our poet's temper, it being the same which belonged to a friend of his by whom he was entertained in Ithaca, during a defluxion on his eyes which seized him in his voyages and at whose house he is said to have laid the plan of this poem. This character of Mentor is well sustained by his speech, and by the assistance he gratefully gives to young Telemachus on all occasions.

V. 258. *Guard thou my sire, and his behests obey.*] The original says only, 'Obey the old man.' Eustathius rightly determines, that the expression means Lactes. The poet loses no opportunity of giving

Stern as he rose, he cast his eyes around, 259
That flash'd with rage; and as he spoke, he frown'd.

O never, never more! let king be just,
Be mild in pow'r, or faithful to his trust!
Let tyrants govern with an iron rod,
Oppress, destroy, and be the scourge of God;
Since he who like a father held his reign, 265
So soon forgot, was just and mild in vain!
True, while my friend is griev'd, his griefs I share;
Yet now the rivals are my smallest care:
They, for the mighty mischiefs they devise,
Ere long shall pay—their forfeit lives the price. 270
But against you, ye Greeks! ye coward train,
Gods! how my soul is mov'd with just disdain?
Dumb ye all stand, and not one tongue affords
His injur'd prince the little aid of words.

While yet he spoke, Leocritus rejoin'd: 275
O pride of words, and arrogance of mind!
Wouldst thou to rise in arms the Greeks advise?
Join all your pow'rs! in arms, ye Greeks, arise!

Ulysses an excellent character; this is as necessary as continually to repeat the disorders of the suitors.

— — — — ‘*Servetur ad inum
Qualis ab incepto processerit, et sibi constet.*’

This conduct contributes admirably to the design of the poem; and when the poet in the unravelling of his fable comes to reward and punish the chief actors, we acknowledge his justice in the death of the suitors, and re-establishment of Ulysses.

Yet would your pow'rs in vain our strength oppose;
 The valiant few o'ermatch an host of foes. 280
 Should great Ulysses stern appear in arms,
 While the bowl circles, and the banquet warms;
 Though to his breast his spouse with transport flies,
 Torn from her breast, that hour, Ulysses dies.
 But hence retreating to your domes repair; 285
 To arm the vessel, Mentor! be thy care,
 And Halitherses! thine: be each his friend;
 Ye lov'd the father: go, the son attend.

V. 282. *While the bowl circles, and the banquet warms.*] The original is not without obscurity: it says, *κατὰ Δαίτη*: or, 'in the time of the banquet.' Eustathius interprets it, *τὴν οἶνον ἀνταγωνίζονται αὐτοῖς*, 'The wine as it were fighting on their side;' and this agrees with what follows.

The design of this speech is to deter the people of Ithaca from rising in the cause of Ulysses: Mentor speaks justly; Leocritus insolently: Mentor sets before them the worth of Ulysses; Leocritus the power of the suitors: Mentor speaks like a brave man; Leocritus (observes Eustathius) like a coward, who wanting true courage, flies to the assistance of wine to raise a false one.

Perhaps it may be objected, that there is not a sufficient distinction in the characters of several suitors; they are all described as insolent voluptuaries. But though they agree in this general character, yet there is something distinguishing in the particular persons: thus Antinous derides, Eurymachus covers villany with mildness; Antinous is ever the foremost in outrage, Eurymachus generally his second: a greater distinction is neither necessary, nor possible to be represented. What the poet is to describe, is the insolence of the suitors, and the disorders they create in his family and kingdom; he is obliged to dwell upon these circumstances, because they are essential to his design: and consequently that general resemblance of their characters is not a fault in the poet.

But yet, I trust, the boaster means to stay
Safe in the court, nor tempt the watry way. 290

Then, with a rushing sound, th' assembly bend,
Diverse their steps: the rival rout ascend
The royal dome; whilst sad the prince explores
The neighb'ring main, and sorrowing treads the shores.
There, as the waters o'er his hands he shed, 295
The royal suppliant to Minerva pray'd.

O goddess! who descending from the skies
Vouchsaf'd thy presence to my wond'ring eyes,
By whose commands the raging deeps I trace, 299
And seek my sire through storms and rolling seas!
Hear from thy heav'ns above, oh warrior-maid!
Descend once more, propitious to my aid.
Without thy presence, vain is thy command;
Greece, and the rival train, thy voice withstand.

Indulgent to his pray'r, the goddess took 305
Sage Mentor's form, and thus like Mentor spoke.

V. 291. *Then with a rushing sound, &c.*] The assembly which was convened by Telemachus, is broke up in a riotous manner by Leocritus, who had no right to dissolve it. This agrees with the lawless state of the country in the absence of its king, and shews (says Eustathius) that the suitors had usurped the chief authority.

There is a fine contrast between the behaviour of Telemachus and that of the suitors. They return to repeat their disorders and debauches; Telemachus retires to supplicate the goddess of wisdom, to assist him in his enterprises. Thus the poet raises the character of Telemachus; he has shewed him to be a youth of a brave spirit, a good speaker, and here represents him as a person of piety.

O prince, in early youth divinely wise,
 Born, the Ulysses of thy age to rise!
 If to the son the father's worth descends,
 O'er the wide waves success thy ways attends: 310
 To tread the walks of death he stood prepar'd;
 And what he greatly thought, he nobly dar'd.
 Were not wise sons descendant of the wise,
 And did not heroes from brave heroes rise;
 Vain were my hopes: few sons attain the praise 315
 Of their great sires, and most their sires disgrace.
 But since thy veins paternal virtue fires,
 And all Penelope thy soul inspires:
 Go, and succeed! the rivals aims despise;
 For never, never, wicked man was wise. 320
 Blind they rejoice, though now, ev'n now they fall;
 Death hastes amain: one hour o'erwhelms them all!
 And lo, with speed we plough the watry way;
 My pow'r shall guard thee, and my hand convey:
 The winged vessel studious I prepare, 325
 Through seas and realms companion of thy care.
 Thou to the court ascend; and to the shores
 (When night advances) bear the naval stores:

V. 307. *The speech of Minerva.*] This speech of Minerva is suited to encourage a young man to imitate the virtue of his father, and not to suffer himself to be overcome by any appearance of difficulties. She sets his father before his eyes, and tells him, there was never any danger which he durst not encounter; if he should suffer himself to be discouraged, he would prove himself an unworthy son of a brave father. DACIER. EUSTATHIUS.

Bread, that decaying man with strength supplies,
 And gen'rous wine, which thoughtful sorrow flies.
 Meanwhile the mariners by my command 331
 Shall speed aboard, a valiant chosen band.
 Wide o'er the bay, by vessel vessel rides;
 The best I choose to waft thee o'er the tides.

She spoke: to his high dome the prince returns,
 And as he moves, with royal anguish mourns. 336
 'Twas riot all, among the lawless train;
 Boar bled by boar, and goat by goat lay slain.
 Arriv'd, his hand the gay Antinous prest,
 And thus deriding, with a smile address. 340

Grieve not, oh daring prince! that noble heart;
 Ill suits gay youth the stern heroic part.

V. 341. *Antinous's speech.* | This speech must be understood ironically: *εγγον τα ιππος τα* is used as before, and has relation to the preceding harangues of Telemachus to the people, and his intended voyage; by way of derision Antinous bids him not trouble his brave spirit in contriving any more orations, or in any bold attempt to find out Ulysses; or to act the orator, or hero's-part.

The critics have almost generally condemned these pieces of gaiety and raillery, as unworthy of heroic poetry: if ever they are proper, they must be so in the mouths of these suitors; persons of no serious or noble characters: mirth, wine, and feasting, is their constant employment; and consequently if they fall into absurdities, they act suitably to their characters. Milton, the best and greatest imitator of Homer, has followed him unworthily in this respect; I mean, has debased even this low raillery into greater lowness, by playing upon words and syllables. But in this place the raillery is not without its effect, by shewing the utmost contempt of Telemachus; and surely it is the lowest degree of calamity to be at once oppressed and despised.

Indulge the genial hour, unbend thy soul,
Leave thought to age, and drain the flowing bowl.
Studious to ease thy grief, our care provides 345
The bark, to waft thee o'er the swelling tides.

Is this (returns the prince) for mirth a time?
When lawless gluttons riot, mirth's a crime;
The luscious wines, dishonour'd, lose their taste;
The song is noise, and impious is the feast. 350
Suffice it to have spent with swift decay
The wealth of kings, and made my youth a prey.
But now the wise instructions of the sage,
And manly thoughts inspir'd by manly age,
Teach me to seek redress for all my woe, 355
Here, or in Pyle—in Pyle, or here, your foe.
Deny your vessels, ye deny in vain;
A private voyager I pass the main.
Free breathe the winds, and free the billows flow,
And where on earth I live, I live your foe. 360

He spoke and frown'd, nor longer deign'd to stay,
Sternly his hand withdrew, and strode away.

Meantime, o'er all the dome, they quaff, they feast,
Derisive taunts were spread from guest to guest,
And each in jovial mood his mate address. 365

Tremble ye not, oh friends! and coward fly,
Doom'd by the stern Telemachus to die?
To Pyle or Sparta to demand supplies,
Big with revenge, the mighty warrior flies:

Or comes from Ephyré with poisons fraught, 370
And kills us all in one tremendous draught?

Or who can say (his gamesome mate replies)
But while the dangers of the deeps he tries,
He, like his sire, may sink depriv'd of breath,
And punish us unkindly by his death? 375
What mighty labours would he then create,
To seize his treasures, and divide his state,
The royal palace to the queen convey,
Or him she blesses in the bridal day!

V. 368. *To Pyle or Sparta to demand supplies.*] It is observable, says Eustathius, that the poet had in his choice several expedients to bring about the destruction of the suitors, but he rejects them, and chooses the most difficult method, out of reverence to truth, being unwilling to falsify the histories of Sparta and Pylos. This has a double effect; it furnishes the poet with a series of noble incidents; and also gives an air of probability to the story of Ulysses and Telemachus.

V. 376. *The royal palace to the queen convey.*] The suitors allot the palace to Penelope: it being, says Eustathius, the only thing that they cannot consume; and adds, that the expression of the suitors, concerning the labour they should undergo in dividing the substance of Ulysses, shews the wealth and abundance of that hero. Dacier has found out an allusion between *πορος* in the first speech, and *πορος* in the second; they differing only in one letter: she calls this a beauty, which she laments she cannot preserve in her translation. She is the only commentator that ever was quick-sighted enough to make the discovery. The words have no relation; they stand at a sufficient distance; and I believe Homer would have thought such trifling unworthy of his poetry. So that all the honour which accrues from that observation must be ascribed (in this case, as in many others) to the commentator, and not the author.

Meantime the lofty rooms the prince surveys,
 Where lay the treasures of th' Ithacian race : 381
 Here ruddy brass and gold refulgent blaz'd;
 There polish'd chests embroider'd vestures grac'd;
 Here jars of oil breath'd forth a rich perfume;
 There casks of wine in rows adorn'd the dome. 385
 (Pure flav'rous wine, by gods in bounty giv'n,
 And worthy to exalt the feasts of heav'n.)
 Untouch'd they stood, till his long labours o'er
 The great Ulysses reach'd his native shore.

V. 381. *Where lay the treasures of th' Ithacian race.*] Such passages as these have ever furnished critics with matter of railery; they think such household cares unworthy of a king, and that this conduct suits better with vulgar persons of less fortune. I confess, such descriptions now would be ridiculous in a poet, because unsuitable to our manners. But if we look upon such passages as pictures and exact representations of the old world, the reader will find a sensible pleasure in them.

It is a true observation, that the *Iliad* is chiefly suitable to the condition of kings and heroes; and consequently filled with circumstances in which the greatest part of mankind can have no concern or interest: the *Odyssey* is of more general use; the story of it is a series of calamities, which concern every man, as every man may feel them. We can bring the sufferings of Ulysses in some degree home to ourselves, and make his condition our own; but what private person can ever be in the circumstances of Agamemnon or Achilles? What I would infer from this is, that the reader ought not to take offence at any such descriptions, which are only mean as they differ from the fashions of the latter ages. In the *Iliad*, Achilles, when he acts in the common offices of life, and not as an hero, is liable to the same objection. But if the manners of the ancient ages be considered, we shall be reconciled to the actions of the ancient heroes; and consequently to Homer.

A double strength of bars secur'd the gates: 390
 Fast by the door the wise Euryclea waits;
 Euryclea, who, great Ops! thy lineage shar'd,
 And watch'd all night, all day; a faithful guard.

To whom the prince. O thou, whose guardian care
 Nurs'd the most wretched king that breathes the air;
 Untouch'd and sacred may these vessels stand, 396
 Till great Ulysses views his native land.
 But by thy care twelve urns of wine be fill'd,
 Next these in worth, and firm those urns be seal'd;
 And twice ten measures of the choicest flour 400
 Prepar'd, ere yet descends the ev'ning hour.
 For when the fav'ring shades of night arise,
 And peaceful slumbers close my mother's eyes,
 Me from our coast shall spreading sails convey,
 To seek Ulysses through the watry way. 405

While yet he spoke, she fill'd the walls with cries,
 And tears ran trickling from her aged eyes.
 Oh whither, whither flies my son? she cry'd,
 To realms, that rocks and roaring seas divide?

* V. 394. — — — *O thou, whose guardian care
 Nurs'd the most wretched king —*]

Euryclea was not properly the nurse of Telemachus, but of Ulysses; so that she is called so not in a strict sense, but as one concerned in his education from his infancy, and as a general appellation of honour. Telemachus here reserves the best wines for Ulysses; a lesson (observes Eustathius) that even in the smallest matters we ought to pay a deference to our parents. These occasional and seemingly-trivial circumstances are not without their use, if not as poetical ornaments, yet as moral instructions.

In foreign lands thy father's days decay'd, 410
And foreign lands contain the mighty dead.

The watry way ill-fated if thou try,

All, all must perish, and by fraud you die!

Then stay, my child! storms beat, and rolls the main;

Oh beat those storms, and roll the seas in vain! 415

Far hence (reply'd the prince) thy fears be driv'n:
Heav'n calls me forth; these counsels are of heav'n.

But by the pow'rs that hate the perjurd, swear,

To keep my voyage from the royal ear,

Nor uncompell'd the dang'rous truth betray, 420

Till twice six times descends the lamp of day:

Lest the sad tale a mother's life impair,

And grief destroy what time awhile would spare.

Thus he. The matron with uplifted eyes

Attests th' all-seeing sov'reign of the skies. 425

Then studious she prepares the choicest flour,

The strength of wheat, and wines an ample store.

V. 421. *'Till twice six times descends the lamp of day.*] It may be demanded how it was probable (if possible), that the departure of Telemachus could be concealed twelve days from the knowledge of so fond a mother as Penelope? It must be allowed, that this would not be possible, except in a time of such great disorder as the suitors created: Penelope confined herself almost continually within her own apartment, and very seldom appeared publicly; so that there is no improbability in this relation. DACIER,

Eustathius makes a criticism upon the words ἀπομνύσαι and ἐπομνύσαι: the former is used negatively, the latter affirmatively; namely, the former in swearing 'not to perform' a thing, the latter 'to perform it.'

While to the rival train the prince returns,
 The martial goddess with impatience burns;
 Like thee, Telemachus, in voice and size, 430
 With speed divine from street to street she flies,
 She bids the mariners prepar'd, to stand,
 When night descends, embody'd on the strand.
 Then to Noemon swift she runs, she flies,
 And asks a bark: the chief a bark supplies. 435
 And now, declining with his sloping wheels,
 Down sunk the sun behind the western hills.
 The goddess shov'd the vessel from the shores,
 And stow'd within its womb the naval stores.
 Full in the op'nings of the spacious main 440
 It rides; and now descends the sailor-train.

V. 432. *She bids the mariners, &c.*] It is probable that this passage of Minerva preparing the mariners, &c. is thus to be understood: the men of Ithaca retaining in memory the speech of Telemachus, and believing that what he then said, and now requests, was agreeable to justice; and having as it were his image graven upon their hearts, voluntarily resolve to lend him assistance: so that Minerva is to be taken allegorically, to imply that it was every person's own reason that induced him to assist Telemachus. EUSTATHIUS.

V. 435. *Noemon — the bark supplies.*] It may be asked why this particularity is necessary, and may it not be thought that such a little circumstance is insignificant? The answer is, that a great deal depends upon this particularity; no less than the discovery of the voyage of Telemachus to the suitors; and consequently, whatever the suitors act in order to intercept him, takes its rise from this little incident; the fountain is indeed small, but a large stream of poetry flows from it.

Next, to the court, impatient of delay,
 With rapid step the goddess urg'd her way:
 There ev'ry eye with slumb'rous chains she bound,
 And dash'd the flowing goblet to the ground. 445
 Drowsy they rose, with heavy fumes oppress,
 Recl'd from the palace, and retir'd to rest.

Then thus, in Mentor's rev'rend form array'd,
 Spoke to Telemachus the martial maid.
 Lo! on the seas, prepar'd the vessel stands, 450
 Th' impatient mariner thy speed demands.
 Swift as she spoke, with rapid pace she leads;
 The footsteps of the Deity he treads.
 Swift to the shore they move: along the strand
 The ready vessel rides, the sailors ready stand. 455

V. 444. *There ev'ry eye with slumb'rous chains she bound.*] The words in the original are *εὐδαιν* and *υπνῶς*, which are not to be taken for being asleep, but drowsy; this is evident from the usage of *καθευδαιν*, in the conclusion of the first book of the Iliad, where the signification has been mistaken by most translators: they make Jupiter there to be asleep, though two lines afterwards, in the second book, Homer expressly says,

Th' immortals slumber'd on their thrones above;
 All, but the ever-waking eyes of Jove.

It may be asked how Minerva can be said to occasion this drowsiness in the suitors, and make them retire sooner than usual? Eustathius replies, that the person who furnished the wine supplied it in greater quantities than ordinary, through which wine they contracted a drowsiness: in this sense Minerva, or wisdom, may be said to assist the designs of Telemachus.

He bids them bring their stores; th' attending train
Load the tall bark, and lanch into the main.
The prince and goddess to the stern ascend;
To the strong stroke at once the rowers bend.
Full from the west she bids fresh breezes blow; 460
The sable billows foam and roar below.
The chief his orders gives; th' obedient band
With due observance wait the chief's command;
With speed the mast they rear, with speed unbind
The spacious sheet, and stretch it to the wind. 465
High o'er the roaring waves the spreading sails
Bow the tall mast, and swell before the gales;
The crooked keel the parting surge divides,
And to the stern retreating roll the tides.
And now they ship their oars, and crown with wine
The holy goblet to the pow'rs divine: 471

V. 460. — — — *She bids fresh breezes blow.*] This also is an allegory, and implies that the sailors had the experience and art to guide the ship before the winds; but poetry, that delights to raise every circumstance, exalts it into the marvellous, and ascribes it to the goddess of wisdom. EUSTATHIUS.

V. 464. *With speed the mast they rear.*] It is observable, that Homer never passes by an opportunity of describing the sea or a ship under sail; and in many other places, as well as in this, he dwells largely upon it: I take the reason to be, not only because it furnished him with variety of poetical images, but because he himself having made frequent voyages, had a full idea of it, and consequently was delighted with it: this is evident from his conduct in the Iliad, where variety of allusions and similitudes are drawn from the sea, and are not the smallest ornaments of his poetry.

Imploring all the gods that reign above,
But chief the blue-ey'd progeny of Jove.

V. 470. — — — — *And crown with wine
The holy goblet to the potu'rs divine.*]

This custom of libations was frequent upon all solemn occasions, before meat, before sleep, voyages, journies, and in all religious rites, sacrifices, &c. They were always made with wine, pure and unmixed, whence *ακρατον* is a word frequent in ancient authors. Sometimes they used mixed wines in sacrifices; but Eustathius says, that this mixture was of wine with wine, and not of wine with water: hence came the distinction of *ενοπονδον* and *ασπονδον*, the unlawful and lawful libation; wine unmixed was lawful, the mixed unlawful. Homer in this place uses *επιστεφας κρηηρας*, or ‘goblets crowned with wine;’ that is, filled till the wine stood above the brim of the goblet; they esteemed it an irreverence to the gods not to fill the cups full, for then only they esteemed the libation *τελοε* and *perfect*, *ολον και τελειον*.

This book takes up the space of one day and one night: it opens with the morning; the speeches in the council, with the preparations for the voyage of Telemachus, are the subject of the day; and the voyage is finished by the next morning. By this last circumstance we may learn that Ithaca was distant from Pylos but one night's voyage, nay something less, there being some time spent after the setting of the sun, in carrying the provisions from the palace to the vessel.

The book consists chiefly in the speeches of Telemachus and his friends against those of the suitors. It shows the great judgment of the poet in choosing this method: hence we see the causes preceding the effects, and know from what spring every action flowed: we are never at a loss for a reason for every incident; the speeches are as it were the groundwork upon which he builds all that relates to the adventures of Telemachus.

In the Iliad, after the dissolution of the council in the first book, and the dissension between Agamemnon and Achilles, we imme-

Thus all the night they stem the liquid way,
And end their voyage with the morning ray. 475

diately see upon what hinge the fable turns. So in the *Odyssey*, after the poet has laid before us the warm debates between the suitors and Telemachus, we immediately expect them to act as enemies: the war is declared, and we become judges as well as spectators of the scenes of action. Thus *Homer* adds the perspicuity of history to the ornaments of poetry.

THE
THIRD BOOK
OF THE
ODYSSEY.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE INTERVIEW OF TELEMACHUS AND NESTOR.

TELEMACHUS, guided by Pallas in the shape of Mentor, arrives in the morning at Pylos, where Nestor and his sons are sacrificing on the sea-shore to Neptune. Telemachus declares the occasion of his coming, and Nestor relates what passed in their return from Troy, how their fleets were separated, and he never since heard of Ulysses. The discourse concerning the death of Agamemnon, the revenge of Orestes, and the injuries of the suitors. Nestor advises him to go to Sparta, and inquire further of Menelaus. The sacrifice ending with the night, Minerva vanishes from them in the form of an eagle: Telemachus is lodged in the palace. The next morning they sacrifice a bullock to Minerva, and Telemachus proceeds on his journey to Sparta, attended by Pisistrutus.

The Scene lies on the sea-shore of Pylos.

THE
ODYSSEY.

BOOK III.*

THE sacred sun, above the waters rais'd,
Through heav'n's eternal, brazen portals blaz'd;
And wide o'er earth diffus'd his cheering ray,
To gods and men to give the golden day.

* The scene is now removed from Ithaca to Pylos, and with it a new vein of poetry is opened: instead of the riots of the suitors, we are entertained with the wisdom and piety of Nestor. This and the following book are a kind of supplement to the *Iliad*: the nature of epic poetry requires that something should be left to the imagination of the reader, nor is the picture to be entirely drawn at full length. Homer, therefore, to satisfy our curiosity, gives an account of the fortunes of those great men, who made so noble a figure at the siege of Troy. This conduct also shews his art: variety gives life and delight; and it is much more necessary in epic than in comic or tragic poetry, sometimes to shift the scenes, to diversify and embellish the story. But as on the stage the poet ought not to step at once from one part of the world to a too remote country, (for this destroys credibility, and the auditor cannot fancy himself this minute here, and the next a thousand miles distant) so in epic poetry, every removal must be within the degrees of probability. We have here a very easy transition; the poet carries his hero no farther than he really might sail in the compass of time he allots for his voyage. If he had

Now on the coast of Pyle the vessel falls, 5
Before old Nélcus' venerable walls.

There, suppliant to the monarch of the flood,
At nine green theatres the Pylans stood,

still dwelt upon the disorders of the suitors without interruption, he must grow tiresome; but he artfully breaks the thread of their story with beautiful incidents and episodes, and reserves the further recital of their disorders for the end of his poem: by this method we sit down with fresh appetite to the entertainment, and rise at last not cloyed, but satisfied.

V. 2. *Through heav'n's eternal, brazen portals* —] The original calls heaven *πολυχαλκον*, or brazen; the reason of it arises either from the palaces of the gods being built of brass by Vulcan; or rather the word implies no more than the stability of heaven, which in other places is called *σιδηρειον*, or framed of iron. EUSTATHIUS.

V. 8. *At nine green theatres.*] It may be asked why the poet is so very particular as to mention that the Pylians were divided into nine assemblies; and may it not seem a circumstance of no importance? Eustathius answers from the ancients, that there were nine cities subject to the power of Nestor: five in Pylos, the rest in Boeotia; the poet therefore allots one bank or theatre to every city, which consisted of five hundred men, the whole number amounting to four thousand five hundred: these cities furnished the like complement of men to Nestor for the war at Troy: he sailed in ninety vessels, and allowing fifty men to each vessel, they amount to that number. Hence it appears that this was a national sacrifice; every city furnished nine bulls, and by consequence the whole nation were partakers of it.

V. S. *The sacrifice of the Pylians.*] This was a very solemn sacrifice of the Pylians: how comes it then to pass, that Homer passes it over in one line? Eustathius answers, that the occasion disallows a longer description, and Homer knows when to speak, and when to be silent. He chooses to carry on the adventures of Telemachus, rather than amuse himself in descriptions that contribute nothing to the story; he finds a time of more leisure in the latter part of this book, and there he describes it at length.

Each held five hundred, (a deputed train)
 At each, nine oxen on the sand lay slain. 10
 They taste the entrails, and the altars load
 With smoking thighs, an off'ring to the god.
 Full for the port the Ithacensians stand,
 And furl their sails, and issue on the land.
 Telemachus already prest the shore; 15
 Not first, the pow'r of Wisdom march'd before,
 And ere the sacrificing throng he join'd,
 Admonish'd thus his well attending mind.

Proceed, my son! this youthful shame expel;
 An honest business never blush to tell. 20
 To learn what fates thy wretched sire detain,
 We past the wide, immeasurable main.
 Meet then the senior far renown'd for sense,
 With rev'rend awe, but decent confidence:
 Urge him with truth to frame his fair replies; 25
 And sure he will: for Wisdom never lies.

V. 11. *They taste the entrails.*] That is, every person eat a small portion of the sacrifice, and by this method every person became partaker of it.

There is nothing in Homer that shews where this sacrifice was offered, whether in a temple, or in the open air. But Eustathius tells us from Strabo, that it was in the temple of Samian Neptune, εν ιερῳ Σαμίου Ποσειδῶν.

V. 25. *Urge him with truth to frame his fair replies;
 And sure he will: for Wisdom never lies.*]

This sentiment is truly noble, and as nobly expressed: the simplicity of the diction corresponds with that of the thought. Homer in many

Oh tell me, Mentor! tell me, faithful guide,
 (The youth with prudent modesty reply'd)
 How shall I meet, or how accost the sage,
 Unskill'd in speech, nor yet mature of age? 30
 Awful th' approach, and hard the task appears,
 To question wisely men of riper years.

To whom the martial goddess thus rejoin'd.
 Search, for some thoughts, thy own suggesting mind;
 And others, dictated by heav'nly pow'r, 35
 Shall rise spontaneous in the needful hour.
 For nought unprosp'rous shall thy ways attend,
 Born with good omens, and with heav'n thy friend.

places testifies the utmost abhorrence of a lie. This verse is twice repeated in the present book, as in some others; and nothing can be stronger in the same view than that of Achilles in the ninth Iliad:

Who dares think one thing, and another tell,
 My heart detests him as the gates of hell.

V. 38. *Born with good omens, and with heav'n thy friend.*] There is some obscurity in the Greek expression, and the ancient critics have made it more obscure by their false interpretations; they imagine that the poet only meant to say, that Telemachus was the legitimate son of Penelope and Ulysses. EUSTATHIUS.

Dacier very justly condemns this explication, as unworthy of Homer; and gives us a more plain and natural interpretation, viz. 'You were not born in despite of the gods; that is, you are well made, and of a good presence, you have good inclinations, and, in a word, your birth is happy.' She explains *τραφεμεν* after the same manner. 'You were not educated in despite of the gods; that is, the gods have blessed your education.' This explication seems to be just, and answers perfectly the design of Minerva; which was to give a decent assurance to Telemachus: you are a person, says the

She spoke, and led the way with swiftest speed :
As swift, the youth pursu'd the way she led ; 40
And join'd the band before the sacred fire,
Where sat, encompass'd with his sons, the sire.
The youth of Pylos, some on pointed wood
Transfix'd the fragments, some prepar'd the food.
In friendly throngs they gather to embrace 45
Their unknown guests, and at the banquet place.
Pisistratus was first, to grasp their hands,
And spread soft hides upon the yellow sands ;
Along the shore th' illustrious pair he led,
Where Nestor sat with youthful Thrasymed. 50

goddess, of a good presence, and happy education, why then should you be ashamed to appear before Nestor?

V. 48. *And spread soft hides upon the yellow sands.*] It is with great pleasure that I read such passages in an author of so great antiquity, as are pictures of the simplicity of those heroic ages: it is the remark of Eustathius, that Pisistratus the son of a king does not seat these strangers upon purple tapestry, or any other costly furniture, but upon the skins of beasts, that had nothing to recommend them but their softness, being spread upon the sand of the sea-shores.

This whole passage pleases me extremely; there is a spirit of true devotion, morality, and good sense in it; and the decency of behaviour between Nestor and Telemachus is described very happily: Nestor shews great benevolence to Telemachus; Telemachus great reverence to Nestor: the modesty of the one, and the humanity of the other, are worthy of our observation. We see the same picture of Nestor in the *Odyssey*, that was drawn of him in the *Iliad*, with this only difference, that there he was a counsellor of war, here he is painted in softer colours, ruling his people in peace, and diffusing a spirit of piety through his whole territories. He had now survived the war of Troy almost ten years; and the gods reward the old age of this wise and religious prince with peace and happiness.

To each a portion of the feast he bore,
 And held a golden goblet foaming o'er;
 Then first approaching to the elder guest,
 The latent goddess in these words addrest.
 Whoe'er thou art, whom fortune brings to keep 55
 These rites of Neptune, monarch of the deep,
 Thee first it fits, oh stranger! to prepare
 The due libation and the solemn pray'r:
 Then give thy friend to shed the sacred wine:
 Though much thy younger, and his years like mine,
 He too, I deem, implores the pow'rs divine: 61
 For all mankind alike require their grace,
 All born to want; a miserable race!

He spake, and to her hand prefer'd the bowl:
 A secret pleasure touch'd Athena's soul, 65
 To see the preference due to sacred age
 Regarded ever by the just and sage.
 Of ocean's king she then implores the grace.
 Oh thou! whose arms this ample globe embrace,
 Fulfil our wish, and let thy glory shine 70
 On Nestor first, and Nestor's royal line;
 Next grant the Pylian states their just desires,
 Pleas'd with their hecatomb's ascending fires;
 Last, deign Telemachus and me to bless,
 And crown our voyage with desir'd success. 75

N. 74. Last, deign Telemachus and me to bless —] Since Minerva here mentions the name of Telemachus in her prayer, how comes it to pass, that Nestor is at a loss to know Telemachus? Mi-

Thus she; and having paid the rite divine,
 Gave to Ulysses' son the rosy wine.
 Suppliant he pray'd. And now the victims drest
 They draw, divide, and celebrate the feast.
 The banquet done, the narrative old man, 80
 Thus mild, the pleasing conference began.

Now, gentle guests! the genial banquet o'er,
 It fits to ask ye, what your native shore,
 And whence your race? on what adventure, say,
 Thus far ye wander through the wat'ry way? 85
 Relate, if business, or the thirst of gain,
 Engage your journey o'er the pathless main:

nerva sat close by Nestor; he must therefore be supposed to hear the prayer; and yet in the following lines he inquires who these strangers are. We can scarce imagine Nestor ignorant that the son of Ulysses was named Telemachus, there being so strict a friendship between Nestor and Ulysses. Perhaps therefore Minerva prayed in secret mentally; or perhaps Nestor might not take notice of what was not addressed immediately to him, and consequently make inquiry about it for the greater certainty.

V. 86. *Relate, if business, or the thirst of gain, &c.*] If we form our images of persons and actions in ancient times, from the images of persons and actions in modern ages, we shall fall into great mistakes: thus in the present passage, if we annex the same idea of piracy, as it was practised three thousand years past, to piracy as it is practised in our ages, what can be a greater affront than this inquiry of Nestor? But, says Eustathius, Piracy was formerly not only accounted lawful, but honourable. I doubt not but Thucydides had this passage in view, when he says, that the ancient poets introduce men inquiring of those who frequent the sea, if they be pirates, as a thing no way ignominious. Thucydides tells us in the same place, that all those who lived on the sea-coast, or in the islands, maintained

Where savage pirates seek through seas unknown
 The lives of others, vent'rous of their own.
 Urg'd by the precepts by the goddess giv'n, 90
 And fill'd with confidence infus'd from heav'n,
 The youth, whom Pallas destin'd to be wise
 And fam'd among the sons of men, replies.
 Inquir'st thou, father! from what coast we came?
 (Oh grace and glory of the Grecian name!) 95
 From where high Ithaca o'erlooks the floods,
 Brown with o'er-arching shades and pendent woods,
 Us to these shores our filial duty draws,
 A private sorrow, not a public cause.
 My sire I seek, where'er the voice of fame 100
 Has told the glories of his noble name,
 The great Ulysses; fam'd from shore to shore
 For valour much, for hardly suff'ring more.
 Long time with thee before proud Ilion's wall
 In arms he fought; with thee beheld her fall. 105
 Of all the chiefs, this hero's fate alone
 Has Jove reserv'd, unheard of, and unknown;
 Whether in fields by hostile fury slain,
 Or sunk by tempests in the gulfy main?
 Of this to learn, oppress'd with tender fears, 110
 Lo, at thy knee his suppliant son appears.

themselves by frequent inroads upon unfortified towns, and if such
 piracies were nobly performed, they were accounted glorious. Herodotus also writes, that many of the ancients, especially about Thrace,
 thought it ignominious to live by labouring the ground, but to live by
 piracy and plunder was esteemed a life of honour. EUSTATHIUS.

If or thy certain eye, or curious ear,
 Have learnt his fate, the whole dark story clear;
 And oh! whate'er heav'n destin'd to betide,
 Let neither flatt'ry smooth, nor pity hide. 115
 Prepar'd I stand: he was but born to try
 The lot of man; to suffer, and to die.
 Oh then, if ever through the ten years war
 The wise, the good Ulysses claim'd thy care;
 If e'er he join'd thy council, or thy sword, 120
 True in his deed, and constant to his word;
 Far as thy mind through backward time can see,
 Search all thy stores of faithful memory:
 'Tis sacred truth I ask, and ask of thee.

To him experienc'd Nestor thus rejoin'd. 125
 O friend! what sorrows dost thou bring to mind?
 Shall I the long, laborious scene review,
 And open all the wounds of Greece anew?
 What toils by sea! where dark in quest of prey
 Dauntless we rov'd; Achilles led the way: 130

V. 125. *The speech of Nestor.*] Enstathius observes the modesty of Nestor: Telemachus had ascribed the fall of Troy in a great measure to Nestor; but Nestor speaks not in particular of himself, but is content with his share of glory in common with other warriors; he speaks in the plural number, and joins all the Greeks as in the war, so in the glory of it. Nestor mentions the sufferings of the Greeks by sea, as well as by land, during the siege of Troy: to understand this, it is necessary to remember, that the Greeks made many expeditions against other places during the war, both by sea and land, as appears from many passages in the Iliad, particularly from what Achilles says in the ninth book.

What toils by land! where mixt in fatal fight
 Such numbers fell, such heroes sunk to night:
 There Ajax great, Achilles there the brave,
 There wise Patroclus, fill an early grave:
 There too my son—ah once my best delight, 135
 Once swift of foot, and terrible in fight,
 In whom stern courage with soft virtue join'd,
 A faultless body, and a blameless mind:
 Antilochus—what more can I relate?
 How trace the tedious series of our fate? 140
 Not added years on years my task could close,
 The long historian of my country's woes:
 Back to thy native islands might'st thou sail,
 And leave half-heard the melancholy tale.

V. 133. *There Ajax great, Achilles there the brave.*] I have observed, that the poet inserts into the *Odyssey* several incidents that happened after the fall of Troy, and by that method agreeably diversifies his poetry, and satisfies the curiosity of the reader. Eustathius remarks here, that he gives a title of honour to all the heroes he mentions, except only to Achilles. Achilles had been the occasion of the sufferings and death of many of the Greeks by his anger, and obstinacy in refusing to obey Agamemnon; therefore while Nestor is lamenting the calamities of the Greeks, he passes over Achilles without any honourable mention, who had so greatly added to their sufferings. But I think this remark chimerical: one may as well say Achilles needed no epithet to distinguish him.

It is with pleasure I see the old man dwell upon the praise of Antilochus: the father enlarges upon the fame of the son; he gives him four epithets of glory; and while Ajax is only praised as a warrior, Antilochus is great and good, excellent in the standing fight, or swift to pursue an enemy. Longinus has observed upon the beauty of this passage.

Nine painful years on that detested shore; 145
 What stratagems we form'd, what toils we bore?
 Still lab'ring on, till scarce at last we found
 Great Jove propitious, and our conquest crown'd.
 Far o'er the rest thy mighty father shin'd,
 In wit, in prudence, and in force of mind. 150
 Art thou the son of that illustrious sire?
 With joy I grasp thee, and with love admire.
 So like your voices, and your words so wise,
 Who finds thee younger must consult his eyes.
 Thy sire and I were one; nor vary'd ought 155
 In public sentence, or in private thought;
 Alike to council or th' assembly came,
 With equal souls, and sentiments the same.
 But when (by wisdom won) proud Ilion burn'd,
 And in their ships the conqu'ring Greeks return'd;

V. 149. *Far o'er the rest thy mighty father shin'd.*] Nestor speaks of Ulysses as an inseparable friend; and it shews an excellent disposition in them both, to be rivals, and yet without envy. But the art of Nestor is remarkable; he first gives the character to Ulysses of being superior in wisdom to all the Greeks; and yet at last he finds a way secretly to set himself on a level with him, if not above him: we ever, says he, thought the same thoughts, and were ever of the same sentiments; which though it may imply that they were of equal wisdom, yet there is room left for it to signify, that Ulysses always assented to the wisdom of Nestor. EUSTATHIUS.

V. 157. *The council or the assembly.*] There is a remarkable difference between *βελή* and *αγορά*. The former denotes a select number of men assembled in council, the latter a public assembly where all the people were present. EUSTATHIUS.

'Twas God's high will the victors to divide, 161
 And turn th' event, confounding human pride:
 Some he destroy'd, some scatter'd as the dust,
 (Not all were prudent, and not all were just).
 Then Discord, sent by Pallas from above, 165
 Stern daughter of the great avenger Jove,
 The brother-kings inspir'd with fell debate;
 Who call'd to council all th' Achaian state,

V. 165, *Sent by Pallas* —] Nestor in modesty conceals the reason of the anger of the goddess, out of respect to Ajax the Locran, who was then dead: the crime of Ajax was the violation of Cassandra even in the temple of Minerva before her image. But why should the goddess be angry at others for the crime of Ajax? This is because they omitted to punish the offender. If Ajax was criminal in offending, others are criminal for not punishing the offence. EUSTATHIUS.

The crime of Ajax is mentioned in Virgil, *Æn.* i.

— — 'Pallasnè exurero classem

Argivùm, atque ipsos potuit submergere ponto,

Unius ab noxam, et furias Ajacis Oilci?' &c.

Could angry Pallas with revengeful spleen

The Grecian navy burn, and drown the men?

She for the fault of one offending foe,

The bolts of Jove himself presum'd to throw. DRYDEN.

Virgil borrowed the description of the punishment of Ajax from the fourth of the *Odyssey*.

V. 168, &c. *Who call'd to council* —

But call'd untimely, &c.]

It may seem at first view, that the poet affirms the night to be an improper season to convene a council. This is not his meaning: in the *Iliad*, there are several councils by night; nay, *εν νυκτι βελη* is used proverbially to express the best concerted councils. What there-

But call'd untimely (not the sacred rite
 Observ'd, nor heedful of the setting light, 170
 Nor herald sworn the session to proclaim)
 Sour with debauch, a reeling tribe they came.
 To these the cause of meeting they explain,
 And Menelaus moves to cross the main;
 Not so the king of men: he will'd to stay; 175
 The sacred rites and hecatombs to pay,
 And calm Minerva's wrath. Oh blind to fate!
 The gods not lightly change their love, or hate.
 With ireful taunts each other they oppose,
 Till in loud tumult all the Greeks arose. 180
 Now different counsels ev'ry breast divide,
 Each burns with rancour to the adverse side:
 Th' unquiet night strange projects entertain'd;
 (So Jove, that urg'd us to our fate, ordain'd.)
 We, with the rising morn our ships unmoor'd, 185
 And brought our captives and our stores aboard;

fore Nestor here condemns is the calling not a select, but a public assembly of the soldiers in the night, when they are in no danger of an enemy, and when they are apt to fly into insolence through wine, and the joy of victory. The night is then undoubtedly an ill chosen season: because the licence of the soldier cannot be so well restrained by night as by day. EUSTATHIUS.

V. 177. *Oh blind to fate!*] It may be asked why Nestor condemns so solemnly this hero, calling him Νηπιός, when he describes him in so pious an action? This is not because the gods are implacable, for as Homer himself writes, Στρεπτοὶ δὲ καὶ θεοὶ αὐτοῖς; but because he vainly imagined that they would so soon be appeased, without any justice done upon the offender; Θεὸν ραδίως παλιντροπὸν are the words of Eustathius.

But half the people with respect obey'd
 The king of men, and at his bidding stay'd.
 Now on the wings of winds our course we keep,
 (For God had smooth'd the waters of the deep)
 For Tenedos we spread our eager oars, 191
 There land, and pay due victims to the pow'rs:
 To bless our safe return we join in pray'r,
 But angry Jove dispers'd our vows in air,
 And rais'd new discord. Then (so heav'n decreed)
 Ulysses first and Nestor disagreed: 196
 Wise as he was, by various counsels sway'd,
 He there, though late, to please the monarch, stay'd.
 But I, determin'd, stem the foamy floods,
 Warn'd of the coming fury of the gods. 200

V. 197. *Wise as he was, by various counsels sway'd,*
He there, though late, to please the monarch, stay'd.]

It is with great address that Nestor relates the return of Ulysses to Agamemnon; he ascribes it not directly to Ulysses, but to his associates in the voyage; he mollifies it, in complaisance to Telemachus. But Nestor, according to Dacier, conceals the true reason of his return; it was not to please Agamemnon, but out of fear of the godless Minerva, whose statue he had taken by force from Troy: to appease that goddess, he returns to join in sacrifice with Agamemnon. EUSTATHIUS.

V. 200. *Warn'd of the coming fury of the gods.]* It may be asked how Nestor attained this knowledge of the evils which the gods were preparing? Eustathius ascribes it to his great wisdom, which gave him an insight into futurity. Dacier with more reason tells us, that Nestor knew that Minerva had been offended, and might consequently apprehend a punishment was to be inflicted for the offence.

With us, Tydides fear'd, and urg'd his haste:
 And Menelaus came, but came the last.
 He join'd our vessels in the Lesbian bay,
 While yet we doubted of our wat'ry way;
 If to the right to urge the pilot's toil, 205
 (The safer road) beside the Psyrian isle;
 Or the straight course to rocky Chios plow,
 And anchor under Mimas' shaggy brow?
 We sought direction of the pow'r divine:
 The god propitious gave the guiding sign; 210
 Through the mid seas he bid our navy steer,
 And in Eubœa shun the woes we fear.
 The whistling winds already wak'd the sky;
 Before the whistling winds the vessels fly,
 With rapid swiftmess cut the liquid way, 215
 And reach Cerestus at the point of day.
 There hecatombs of bulls, to Neptune slain,
 High-flaming please the monarch of the main.
 The fourth day shone, when all their labours o'er
 Tydides' vessels touch'd the wish'd-for shore: 220
 But I to Pylos scud before the gales,
 The god still breathing on my swelling sails;

V. 221. *But I to Pylos, &c.*] Eustathius observes from the ancients, that the poet with great judgment suspends, and breaks off this relation of Nestor; by this method he has an opportunity to carry Telemachus to other countries, and insert into his poem the story of Menelaus and Helen: this method likewise gives an air of probability to what he writes; the poet seems afraid to deceive, and when he

Sep'rate from all, I safely landed here;
 Their fates or fortunes never reach'd my ear.
 Yet what I learn'd, attend; as here I sat, 225
 And ask'd each voyager each hero's fate;
 Curious to know, and willing to relate.

Safe reach'd the Myrmidons their native land,
 Beneath Achilles' warlike son's command.
 Those, whom the heir of great Apollo's art, 230
 Brave Philoctetes, taught to wing the dart;
 And those whom Idomen from Ilion's plain
 Had led, securely cross'd the dreadful main.
 How Agamemnon touch'd his Argive coast,
 And how his life by fraud and force he lost, 235
 And how the murderer paid his forfeit breath;
 What lands so distant from that scene of death

sends Telemachus to other parts for better intelligence, he seems to consult truth and exactness.

V. 229, *Achilles' warlike son.*] The son of Achilles was named Neoptolemus, by others Pyrrhus; his story is this: when he had reached Thessaly with the Myrmidons of Achilles, by the advice of Thetis he set fire to his vessels; and being warned by Helenus, from the oracles, to fix his habitation where he found a house whose foundations were iron, whose walls were wood, and whose roof was wool; he took his journey on foot, and coming to a certain lake of Epirus, he found some persons fixing their spears with the point downwards into the earth, and covering the tops of them with their cloaks, and after this manner making their tents: he looked upon the oracle as fulfilled, and dwelt there. Afterwards having a son by Andromache the wife of Hector, he named him Molossus, from whom the region took the name of Molossia. From this country are the Molossi canes, mentioned by Virgil. EUSTATHIUS.

But trembling heard the fame? and heard, admire
 How well the son appeas'd his slaughter'd sire!
 Ev'n to th' unhappy, that unjustly bleed, 240
 Heav'n gives posterity, t' avenge the deed.
 So fell Ægysthus; and may'st thou, my friend,
 (On whom the virtues of thy sire descend)
 Make future times thy equal act adore,
 And be what brave Orestes was before! 245

The prudent youth reply'd. O thou the grace
 And lasting glory of the Grecian race!
 Just was the vengeance, and to latest days
 Shall long posterity resound the praise.
 Some god this arm with equal prowess bless! 250
 And the proud suitors shall its force confess:
 Injurious men! who while my soul is sore
 Of fresh affronts, are meditating more.
 But heav'n denies this honour to my hand,
 Nor shall my father repossess the land: 255

V. 242. *So fell Ægysthus; and may'st thou, my friend, &c.*] Nestor introduces the mention of Ægysthus very artfully; it is to raise an emulation in Telemachus to revenge Ulysses, as Orestes had Agamemnon; it has the intended effect, and we find that Telemachus dwells upon his story with a virtuous envy, yet at the same time with great modesty; Eustathius gives a different reading in

— — — εσσομενοισι πυθεςσαι, or
 εσσομεγονσιν αιδην.

Both the expressions are used in Homer, the preference is therefore submitted to the reader.

The father's fortune never to return,
And the sad son's to suffer and to mourn!

Thus he; and Nestor took the word: My son,
Is it then true, as distant rumours run,
That crowds of rivals for thy mother's charms 260
Thy palace fill with insults and alarms?
Say, is the fault, through tame submission, thine?
Or leagu'd against thee, do thy people join,
Mov'd by some oracle, or voice divine?
And yet who knows, but ripening lies in fate 265
An hour of vengeance for th' afflicted state;
When great Ulysses shall suppress these harms,
Ulysses singly, or all Greece in arms.

V. 264. *Mov'd by some oracle, or voice divine?*] The words in the original are, 'following the voice of some god,' that is, some oracle; Homer does not confine the expression either to a good or bad sense, but the context plainly shews, that they must be understood in a bad sense; namely, to imply, that the people had recourse to pretended oracles to justify their rebellion. This is evident from what follows, where Nestor encourages Telemachus to expect that Ulysses may punish them for their crimes, ἀποτισσειας εἶλον — if there had been no crime, there ought to be no punishment.

V. 268. *Ulysses singly, or all Greece in arms.*] The poet shews his great judgment in preparing the reader for the destruction of the suitors; that great catastrophe is managed by few hands, and it might seem incredible that so few could destroy so many: the poet therefore, to give an air of truth to his action, frequently inculcates the assistance of Pallas, which must at least shew, that such a great exploit is not impossible to be executed by stratagems and valour: it is by art, not strength, that Ulysses conquers.

'All Greece in arms.'

This is spoken in a general sense, and comprehends not only the

But if Athena, war's triumphant maid,
The happy son, will, as the father, aid, 270
(Whose fame and safety was her constant care
In ev'ry danger and in ev'ry war:
Never on man did heav'nly favour shine
With rays so strong, distinguish'd and divine,
As those with which Minerva mark'd thy sire) 275
So might she love thee, so thy soul inspire!
Soon should their hopes in humble dust be laid,
And long oblivion of the bridal bed.

subjects of Ulysses, or even the Pylians and Spartans, but implicit, that all the Greeks would rise in the cause of Ulysses. What the suitors had spoken scoffingly in the preceding book, that Telemachus was sailing to Pyle or Sparta for supplies, appears in this not to be impracticable; so that it was choice, and not necessity, that determined the poet to make use of no such easy expedients for the destruction of the suitors. EUSTATIUS.

It may be added, that the very nature of epic poetry, and of the *Odyssey* in particular, requires such a conduct: in the *Iliad*, Achilles is the chief agent, and performs almost all the great actions; Æneas is painted after the same manner by Virgil; the one kills Hector, the other Turnus, both which are the decisive actions: it was equally necessary to exalt the character of Ulysses, by bringing him into difficulties from which he is personally to extricate himself: this the poet sufficiently brings about by refusing all the easy methods for his re-establishment, because the more difficult ways are most conducive to the honour of his hero: thus as Achilles and Æneas kill Hector and Turnus with their own hands, so the suitors fall chiefly by the hand of Ulysses. It is necessary for the hero of the poem to execute the decisive action, for by this method the poet completes his character, his own greatness surmounts all difficulties, and he goes off the stage with the utmost advantage, by leaving a noble character upon the mind of the spectators.

Ah! no such hope (the prince with sighs replies)
 Can touch my breast; that blessing heav'n denies.
 Ev'n by celestial favour were it giv'n, 281
 Fortune or fate would cross the will of heav'n.

What words are these, and what imprudence thine?
 (Thus interpos'd the martial maid divine)
 Forgetful youth! but know, the Pow'r above 285
 With ease can save each object of his love;
 Wide as his will, extends his boundless grace;
 Nor lost in time, nor circumscrib'd by place.

V. 282. *Fortune or fate would cross the will of heav'n.*] It may be asked how an expression so near blasphemy, as Mustathius observes, could escape a person of such piety as Telemachus? It is true, the poet makes Minerva herself correct it; but yet the objection remains, viz. how could Telemachus speak it? I think, since the poet himself condemns it, we may give it up as an indecency in Telemachus; it is natural for men in despair (and that was the condition of Telemachus) to use a vehemence of expression, and this might transport Telemachus beyond the bounds of prudence. The only possible way that occurs to me to take off the impiety, is to have recourse to destiny: it was the opinion of the ancients, that the gods could not alter destiny: and then Telemachus may mean no more, than that it was decreed by the destinies that Ulysses should return no more, so the gods themselves could not restore him.

Thus in the xvth of the Metamorphosis, Venus in vain applies to the gods to preserve Julius Cæsar.

— — ‘ Superosque movet, qui rumpere quanquam
 Ferrea non possunt veterum decreta sororum,’ &c.

And a little lower Jupiter says to Venus,

— — — ‘ Sola insuperabile fatum,
 Nata, movere paras?’

Happier his lot, who many sorrows past,
 Long lab'ring gains his natal shore at last; 290
 Than who too speedy, hastes to end his life
 By some stern ruffian, or adult'rous wife.
 Death only is the lot which none can miss,
 And all is possible to heav'n, but this.
 The best, the dearest fav'rite of the sky 295
 Must taste that cup, for man is born to die.
 Thus check'd, reply'd Ulysses' prudent heir:
 Mentor, no more—the mournful thought forbear;

V. 289. *Happier his lot, who, &c.*] Nothing can be better imagined to encourage Telemachus, than what the poet here delivers: Minerva sets Agamemnon in opposition to Ulysses: Agamemnon made a speedy voyage to his country, and there fell by treachery; Ulysses has long been absent, but yet is happier than Agamemnon: the gods perhaps reserve him for better fortunes, at least nothing can be concluded from his long absence, and this is sufficient to teach Telemachus not to despair. EUSTATHIUS.

V. 294. *And all is possible to heav'n, but this.*] What Minerva here says justifies the remark I made, that what Telemachus seemed to have spoken rashly, may be softened, if not vindicated, by having recourse to destiny: it is evident from this passage, that destiny was superior to the power of the gods: otherwise Minerva speaks as blasphemously as Telemachus: for what difference is there between saying, that the gods cannot preserve even those they love from death, and saying that the gods could not save Ulysses? Why therefore may not the words of Telemachus be thought to have a respect to destiny?

I am of opinion, that the poet had something further in view by putting these words into the mouth of Minerva: the words of Telemachus, if taken grossly, might appear shocking to so pious a person as Nestor, and make an ill impression upon him to the disadvantage of Telemachus; Minerva therefore artfully explains it, and softens the horror of it by reconciling it to the theology of those ages.

For he no more must draw his country's breath,
 Already snatch'd by fate, and the black doom of death!
 Pass we to other subjects; and engage 301
 On themes remote the venerable sage:
 (Who thrice has seen the perishable kind
 Of men decay, and through three ages shin'd,
 Like gods majestic, and like gods in mind.) 305
 For much he knows, and just conclusions draws
 From various precedents, and various laws.

V. 301. *Pass we to other subjects; —*] Telemachus here puts several questions, as it were in a breath, to Nestor; and Plutarch observes upon this passage, that he who inquires any thing of an old man, though the old man himself has no concern in the story, wins his heart at once; and incites a person, who is upon all occasions very willing to discourse. He introduces this as an instance of the art Telemachus uses, in adapting himself by his questions to the temper of the person with whom he converses: he puts together, continues he, several questions upon several subjects, which is more judicious than to confine his answer to a single interrogatory, and by that method deprive Nestor of one of the most pleasant enjoyments of old age, I mean the pleasure of talking. PLUTARCH. SYMPOSIAC.

V. 303. *Who thrice had seen the perishable kind
 Of men decay, —*]

The poet here tells us that Nestor was now in his fourth generation: Ovid took the word *years* to signify an hundred years; but then Nestor must have been above three hundred years old. Others with more probability understand it to signify a generation, or such a portion of time in which any race of men flourish together, which is computed to be about thirty years. I refer the reader to the note of the 333d verse of the first book of the Iliad, for the particular age of Nestor. According to that computation, he must now be about ninety-five years of age.

O son of Neleus! awful Nestor, tell
 How he, the mighty Agamemnon, fell? 309
 By what strange fraud Ægysthus wrought, relate,
 (By force he could not) such a hero's fate?
 Liv'd Menelaus not in Greece! or where
 Was then the martial brother's pious care?
 Condemn'd perhaps some foreign shore to tread;
 Or sure Ægysthus had not dar'd the deed. 315
 To whom the Full of Days. Illustrious youth,
 Attend (though partly thou hast guess'd) the truth.
 For had the martial Menelaus found
 The ruffian breathing yet on Argive ground;
 Nor earth had hid his carcase from the skies, 320
 Nor Grecian virgins shrick'd his obsequies,
 But fowls obscene dismember'd his remains,
 And dogs had torn him on the naked plains.
 While us the works of bloody Mars employ'd,
 The wanton youth inglorious peace enjoy'd; 325
 He, stretch'd at ease in Argos' calm recess,
 (Whose stately steeds luxuriant pastures bless)
 With flattery's insinuating art
 Sooth'd the frail queen, and poison'd all her heart.

V.309. *How he, the mighty Agamemnon, fell?* Telomachus does not ask this question out of curiosity, but with great judgment; he knows there were designs against his life, as well as there had been against Agamemnon; he therefore asks it, that he may learn how to defeat them; chiefly to instruct himself how best to assist his father upon his return, by aiding him in escaping the snares of the suitor.
 DACIER.

At first with worthy shame and decent pride, 330
 The royal dame his lawless suit deny'd.
 For virtue's image yet possess'd her mind,
 Taught by a master of the tuneful kind:
 Atrides, parting for the Trojan war,
 Consign'd the youthful consort to his care. 335
 True to his charge, the bard preserv'd her long
 In honour's limits; such the pow'r of song.

V. 333. *Taught by a master of the tuneful kind.*] Homer through the whole Odyssey speaks much in honour of the art which he himself loved, and in which he so eminently excelled: from these and other passages we may learn the state of poetry in those ages: 'Poets (says Eustathius) were ranked in the class of philosophers; and the ancients made use of them as preceptors in music and morality.' Strabo quotes this very passage as an instance of the excellence of poetry in forming the soul to worthy actions: Ægyptus could not debauch Clytemnestra, until he banished the poet who was her guide and instructor.

Various are the conjectures of the ancients about the name of the bard here celebrated: some, says Eustathius, tell us, it was Charicles, some Demodocus, some Glaucus, &c. but I pass them over, because they are conjectures.

There were many degrees of these *αἰδοί*; some were *αἰδοί θεῶν*, others *αἰδοί περὶ γάμους*: but such bards as are here mentioned were of an higher station, and retained as instructors by kings and princes.

I cannot omit one remark of Eustathius: he tells us, that some persons write that these *αἰδοί* had their names from hence, *ὡς αἰδοῖα μὴ ἐχούτες*; exactly resembling the modern Italian singers: Madam Dacier is not to be forgiven for passing over a remark of such importance; if this be true, it makes a great difference between the ancient and modern poets, and is the only advantage I know we have over them.

But when the gods these objects of their hate
 Dragg'd to destruction, by the links of fate;
 The bard they banish'd from his native soil, 340
 And left all helpless in a desert isle:
 There he, the sweetest of the sacred train,
 Sung dying to the rocks, but sung in vain.
 Then virtue was no more; her guard away,
 She fell, to lust a voluntary prey. 345
 Ev'n to the temple stalk'd th' adult'rous spouse,
 With impious thanks, and mockery of vows,
 With images, with garments, and with gold;
 And od'rous fumes from loaded altars roll'd,

V. 344. *Then virtue was no more; her guard away,
 She fell, ——— &c.]*

There is a fine moral couched in the story of the bard and Clytemnestra; it admirably paints the advantage we draw from wise companions for the improvement of our virtues: Clytemnestra was chaste, because her instructor was wise: his wisdom was an insuperable guard to her modesty. It was long before she yielded; virtue and honour had a long contest; but she no sooner yielded to adultery, but she assisted in the murder of her husband; from whence we may draw another moral, that one vice betrays us into another: and when once the fences of honour are thrown down, we become a prey to every passion. DACIER.

V. 346. *Ev'n to the temple stalk'd th' adult'rous spouse.]* Here is a surprising mixture of religion and impiety: Ægisthus, upon the accomplishment of so great a crime as adultery, returns thanks to the gods by oblations, as if they had assisted him in the execution of it. Nestor dwells upon it at large, to shew that Ægisthus greatly aggravated his guilt by such a piece of impious devotion. DACIER.

Meantime from flaming Troy we cut the way,
 With Menelaus, through the curling sea. 351
 But when to Sunium's sacred point we came,
 Crown'd with the temple of th' Athenian dame;
 Atrides' pilot, Phrontes, there expir'd;
 (Phrontes, of all the sons of men admir'd 355
 To steer the bounding bark with steady toil,
 When the storm thickens, and the billows boil)
 While yet he exercis'd the steerman's art,
 Apollo touch'd him with his gentle dart;
 Ev'n with the rudder in his hand, he fell. 360
 To pay whose honours to the shades of hell,
 We check'd our haste, by pious office bound,
 And laid our old companion in the ground.

V. 359. *Apollo touch'd him with his gentle dart.*] Homer calls the darts of Apollo *ayava*, or gentle; to signify that those who die thus suddenly, die without pain. RUSTATIUS.

Dacier complains that some critics think Homer worthy of blame for enlarging upon so mean a person as a pilot. It is a sufficient answer to observe, that arts were in high esteem in those times, and men that were eminent in them were in great honour. Neither were arts then confined as in these ages to mean personages: no less a person than Ulysses builds a vessel in the sequel of the *Odyssey*; so that this is a false piece of delicacy. If Homer be culpable, so is Virgil; he gives the genealogy of Palinurus, as well as Homer of Phrontes. Virgil's description is censured as too long, Homer concludes his in seven lines; and lastly, Virgil's Episode has been judged by the critics to be an unnecessary ornament, and to contribute nothing to the poem: Homer relates the death of Phrontes, to introduce the dispersion of the fleet of Menelaus; the fleet might well be scattered, when it wanted so excellent a pilot.

And now the rites discharg'd, our course we keep
 Far on the gloomy bosom of the deep: 365
 Soon as Malæa's misty tops arise,
 Sudden the thund'rer blackens all the skies,
 And the winds whistle, and the surges roll
 Mountains on mountains, and obscure the pole.
 The tempest scatters, and divides our fleet; 370
 Part, the storm urges on the coast of Crete,
 Where winding round the rich Cydonian plain,
 The streams of Jarlan issue to the main.
 There stands a rock, high eminent and steep,
 Whose shaggy brow o'erhangs the shady deep, 375
 And views Gortyna on the western side;
 On this rough Auster drove th' impetuous tide:
 With broken force the billows roll'd away,
 And heav'd the fleet into the neighb'ring bay;
 Thus sav'd from death, they gain'd the Phæstan shores,
 With shatter'd vessels, and disabled oars: 381
 But five tall barks the winds and waters tost,
 Far from their fellows, on th' Ægyptian coast.

* V. 371. *Part, the storm urges on the coast of Crete.*] Homer does not amuse us by relating what became of these companions of Menelaus; he omits this judiciously, and follows the thread of his story: Menelaus is the person whom the poet has in view; he therefore passes over the story of his companions, to carry on the fable of the poem by leading us directly to Menelaus.

V. 383. ——— *On th' Ægyptian coast.*] In the original it is, 'The wind and water carried them to Ægyptus.' Homer by Ægyptus means the river Nile, and then it is always used in the masculine gender: the region about it took its name from the river Ægyptus,

There wander'd Menelaus through foreign shores,
 Amassing gold, and gath'ring naval stores ; 385
 While curst Ægyptus the detested deed
 By fraud fulfill'd, and his great brother bled.
 Sev'n years the traitor rich Mycenæ sway'd,
 And his stern rule the groaning land obey'd ;
 The eighth, from Athens to his realm restor'd, 390
 Orestes brandish'd the revenging sword,
 Slew the dire pair, and gave to fun'ral flame
 The vile assassin, and adult'rous dame.
 That day, ere yet the bloody triumphs cease,
 Return'd Atrides to the coast of Greece, 395
 And safe to Argos' port his navy brought,
 With gifts of price and pond'rous treasure fraught.

this is always used in the feminine gender; but the country had not received that name in the days of Homer. EUSTATHIUS.

What Dacier adds to this observation, may assist in determining the dispute concerning the priority of Homer and Hesiod: Hesiod makes mention of the river Nilus; if therefore it be true that Ægyptus had not been called by the name of Nilus in the time of Homer, it is a demonstration that Hesiod was posterior to Homer; otherwise he could not have been acquainted with any other name but that of Ægyptus.

V. 390. *From Athens to his realm* ———] There is a different reading in this place; instead of *απ' Αθηνων*, some write *απο Φωκων*; for Orestes was educated by Strophius king of Phocis, and father of Pylades: the ancients reconcile the difference, by saying that Orestes might be sent from Phocis to Athens for his education, and returning thence to his own country, might revenge the death of his father Agamemnon; so that although he was first bred up in Phocis, he was afterwards a sojourner in Athens. EUSTATHIUS.

Hence warn'd, my son, beware! nor idly stand
 Too long a stranger to thy native land;
 Lest heedless absence wear thy wealth away, 400
 While lawless feasters in thy palace sway;
 Perhaps may seize thy realm, and share the spoil;
 And thou return, with disappointed toil,
 From thy vain journey, to a rifled isle.
 Howe'er, my friend, indulge one labour more, 405
 And seek Atrides on the Spartan shore.
 He, wand'ring long, a wider circle made,
 And many-languag'd nations has survey'd;
 And measur'd tracts unknown to other ships,
 Amid the monstrous wonders of the deeps: 410
 (A length of ocean and unbounded sky,
 Which scarce the sea-fowl in a year o'erfly)

V. 411. *A length of ocean and unbounded sky,
 Which scarce the sea-fowl in a year o'erfly.*]

It must be confessed, that Nestor greatly exaggerates this description: Homer himself tells us, that a ship may sail in five days from Crete to Ægypt; wherefore then this hyperbole of Nestor? It might perhaps be to deter Telemachus from a design of sailing to Crete, and he through his inexperience might believe the description. It may be added, that what Nestor speaks concerning the flight of birds, may be only said to shew the great distance of that sea: nay, by a favourable interpretation it may be reconciled to truth; the meaning then must be this: should a person observe that sea a whole year, he would not see one bird flying over it, both because of the vastness and dreadfulness of it; and perhaps the whole of this might arise from the observation, that this sea is not frequented by birds. This is wholly and almost literally taken from Eustathius; and if we add

Go then; to Sparta take the wat'ry way,
 Thy ship and sailors but for orders stay;
 Or if by land thou choose thy course to bend, 415
 My steeds, my chariots, and my sons attend:
 Thee to Atrides they shall safe convey,
 Guides of thy road, companions of thy way.
 Urge him with truth to frame his free replies,
 And sure he will: for Menelaus is wise. 420

Thus while he speaks, the ruddy sun descends,
 And twilight grey her ev'ning shade extends.
 Then thus the blue-ey'd maid: O Full of Days!
 Wise are thy words, and just are all thy ways.
 Now immolate the tongues, and mix the wine, 425
 Sacred to Neptune and the pow'rs divine.

to this the ignorance of the sea and sea-affairs in those ages, we shall the less wonder to hear so wise a man as Nestor describing it with so much terror. Navigation is now greatly improved, and the moderns sail further in a month, than the ancients could in a year; their whole art consisting chiefly in coasting along the shores, and consequently they made but little way.

V. 425. *Now immolate the tongues* —] Various are the reasons which Eustathius reports concerning this oblation of the tongues at the conclusion of the sacrifice. It was to purge themselves from any evil words they might have uttered; or because the tongue was reckoned the best part of the sacrifice, and so reserved for the completion of it; or they offered the tongues to the gods, as witnesses to what they had spoken. I omit the rest as superfluous. They had a custom of offering the tongues to Mercury, because they believed him the giver of eloquence. Dacier expatiates upon this custom. The people, says she, might fear, lest through wine and the joy of the festival, they might have uttered some words unbecoming the sanctity of the occasion: by this sacrifice of the tongues, they signified

The lamp of day is quench'd beneath the deep,
 And soft approach the balmy hours of sleep:
 Nor fits it to prolong the heav'nly feast,
 Timeless, indecent, but retire to rest. 430

So spake Jove's daughter, the celestial maid.
 The sober train attended and obey'd.
 The sacred heralds on their hands around
 Pour'd the full urns; the youths the goblets crown'd:
 From bowl to bowl the holy bev'rage flows; 435
 While to the final sacrifice they rose.
 The tongues they cast upon the fragrant flame,
 And pour, above, the consecrated stream.

that they purged away whatever they had spoken amiss during the festival; and asked in particular pardon of Mercury, who presided over discourse, to the end they might not carry home any uncleanness which might stop the blessings expected from the sacrifice.

V. 429. *Nor fits it to prolong the heav'nly feast,*
Timeless, 'indecent, &c.]

And now, their thirst by copious draughts allay'd,
 The youthful hero and th' Athenian maid 440
 Propose departure from the finish'd rite,
 And in their hollow bark to pass the night:
 But this the hospitable sage deny'd.
 Forbid it, Jove! and all the gods! he cry'd,
 Thus from my walls the much-lov'd son to send 445
 Of such a hero, and of such a friend!
 Me, as some needy peasant, would ye leave,
 Whom heav'n denies the blessing to relieve?
 Me would you leave, who boast imperial sway,
 When beds of royal state invite your stay? 450

V. 450. *When beds of royal state invite your stay?* This passage gives us a full insight into the manners of these hospitable ages; they not only kept a treasury for bowls or vases of gold or silver, to give as *ξενίαι*, or gifts of hospitality, but also a wardrobe of various habits and rich furniture, to lodge and bestow upon strangers. Enstatius relates, that Tullius of Agrigentum was a person of so great hospitality, that five hundred horsemen coming to his house in the winter season, he entertained them, and gave every man a cloak and a tunic. This laudable custom prevailed, and still prevails, in the eastern countries: it was the practice of Abraham of old, and is at this day of the Turks, as we may learn from their caravanseras, erected for the reception of travellers. And yet Dacier observes, that a French critic has shewed so ill a taste as to ridicule this passage. 'Telemachus (says that author) being entertained by Nestor, intimates his intention of returning to lodge on ship-board with his companions: but Nestor detains him, by asking him if he thought he had not quilts or coverlets to give him a night's lodging: upon this Telemachus goes to bed in a resounding gallery, and Nestor in a bed which his wife made ready for him.' The noblest things are most liable to burlesque, by perverting their meaning; as some pictures,

No — long as life this mortal shall inspire,
Or as my children imitate their sire,
Here shall the wand'ring stranger find his home,
And hospitable rites adorn the dome.

Well hast thou spoke (the blue-ey'd maid replies)
Belov'd old man! benevolent, as wise. 456

Be the kind dictates of thy heart obey'd,
And let thy words Telemachus persuade:
He to thy palace shall thy steps pursue;
I to the ship, to give the orders due, 460
Prescribe directions, and confirm the crew.

For I alone sustain their naval cares,
Who boast experience from these silver hairs;
All youths the rest, whom to this journey move
Like years, like tempers, and their prince's love.
There in the vessel shall I pass the night; 466

And soon as morning paints the fields of light,
I go to challenge from the Caucons bold,
A debt, contracted in the days of old.

by varying the position, represent a man or a monster. He is very severe upon the resounding gallery, which in truth means no more than very lofty or elevated, and by consequence very noble and magnificent.

V. 468, *I go to challenge from the Caucons.*] The poet makes a double use of these words of the goddess; she gives an air of probability to her excuse, why she should not be pressed to stay; and at the same time Homer avoids the absurdity of introducing that goddess at Sparta; Menelaus and Helen are celebrating the nuptials of their son and daughter: Minerva is a virgin deity, and consequently an enemy to all nuptial ceremonies. EUSTATHIUS.

But this thy guest, receiv'd with friendly care, 470
 Let thy strong coursers swift to Sparta bear;
 Prepare thy chariot at the dawn of day,
 And be thy son companion of his way.

Then turning with the word, Minerva flies,
 And soars an eagle through the liquid skies. 475
 Vision divine! the throng'd spectators gaze
 In holy wonder fix'd, and still amaze.
 But chief the rev'rend sage admir'd; he took
 The hand of young Telemachus, and spoke,

But it may be necessary to observe who these Caucons are: we find in the tenth book of the Iliad, the Caucons mentioned as auxiliaries to Troy: there Dolon says,

The Carians, Caucons, the Pelasgian host,
 And Leleges encamp along the coast.

Are these Caucons the same with those here mentioned? Eustathius informs us, that there was a people of Triphyly, between Elis and Pylos, named Caucons: but Strabo says, that the whole race is now extinct, and that these here mentioned are of Dymna, and take their name from the river Caucon; whereas those in the Iliad are Paphlagonians: they were a wandering nation, and consequently might be the same people originally, and retain the same name in different countries.

V. 478. *But chief the rev'rend sage admir'd* —] It may be asked why Nestor is in such a surprise at the discovery of the goddess: it is evident from the Iliad, that he had been no stranger to such intercourses of the deities; nay, in this very book Nestor tells us, that Ulysses enjoyed almost the constant presence of Minerva; in-somuch that Sophocles, the great imitator of Homer, relates, that he knew the goddess by her voice, without seeing her. Eustathius answers, that the wonder of Nestor arose not from the discovery of that deity, but that she should accompany so young a person as Tele-

Oh happy youth! and favour'd of the skies, 480
Distinguish'd care of guardian deities!

machus: after her departure, the old man stood amazed, and looked upon that hero as some very extraordinary person, whom in such early years the goddess of war and wisdom had vouchsafed to attend. This interpretation agrees perfectly with what Nestor speaks to Telemachus.

V. 481. *Distinguish'd care of guardian deities* [/] I will take this opportunity to obviate an objection that may be made against all interposition of the gods in assisting the heroes of the *Odyssey*: it has been thought by some critics a disparagement to them to stand in continual need of such supernatural succour: if two persons were engaged in combat, and a third person should immediately step in to the assistance of one of the parties, and kill the adversary, would it not reflect upon the valour of his friend who was so weak as to want such assistance? Why, for instance, should Jupiter help *Aeneas* to kill *Turnus*? Was not he brave enough to fight, and strong enough to conquer his enemy by his own prowess? and would not *Turnus* have killed *Aeneas* with the same assistance? It is therefore a disparagement to the actors, thus continually to supply the defects of a hero by the power of a deity.

But this is a false way of arguing, and from hence it might be inferred, that the love and favour of a deity serves only to make those whom he assists, and those who depend upon such assistance, appear weak, impotent, cowardly, and unworthy to be conquerors. Can any doubt arise whether the love and favour of a god be a disparagement or honour to those whom he favours? According to these critics, we should find the character of a perfect hero in an impious *Mezentius*, who acknowledges no god but his own arm and his own sword: it is true, the objection would be just, if the hero himself performed nothing of the action; or if when he were almost conquered by the superior valour of his enemy, he owed his life and victory to gods and miracles: but the hero always behaves himself in all his actions, as if he were to gain success without the assistance of the deity; and the presence of the gods is so ordered, that we may re-trench every thing that is miraculous, without making any alteration

Whose early years for future worth engage,
 No vulgar manhood, no ignoble age.
 For lo! none other of the court above
 Than she, the daughter of almighty Jove, 485
 Pallas herself, the war-triumphant maid,
 Confess'd is thine, as once thy father's aid.
 So guide me, goddess! so propitious shine
 On me, my consort, and my royal line!
 A yearling bullock to thy name shall smoke, 490
 Untam'd, unconscious of the galling yoke,
 With ample forehead, and yet tender horns,
 Whose budding honours ductile gold adorns.

in the action or character of the human personages. Thus in the instance of *Æneas* and *Turnus*, though *Jupiter* favours *Æneas*, yet *Æneas* is painted in stronger colours of fortitude, he appears superior, as a man unassisted, and able to conquer *Turnus*; and consequently the favour of *Jupiter* makes no alteration in the action or character of *Æneas*.

There is likewise a wide-difference between the assistance of a man and of a god: the actions of men belong only to the performers of those actions; but when a deity assists us by inspiring us with strength and courage, the actions we perform are really our own, and the more he favours us, the more glory he gives us: so that the assistance of man eclipses, but the assistance of a god exalts, our glory. Thus, for instance, when *Achilles* is pursuing *Hector*, he charges the Greeks to keep off from *Hector*, their assistance might lessen his glory: but when *Pallas* offers her assistance, he immediately embraces it as an honour, and boasts of it as such to *Hector*. I have been large upon this objection, because the reader ought to carry it in his memory through the whole poem, and apply it to every action, in which any share is ascribed to any deity. See *Bossu* more at large concerning this objection.

Submissive thus the hoary sire preferr'd
His holy vow: the fav'ring goddess heard. 495
Then slowly rising, o'er the sandy space
Precedes the father, follow'd by his race,
(A long procession) timely marching home
In comely order to the regal dome.
There when arriv'd, on thrones around him plac'd,
His sons and grandsons the wide circle grac'd. 501
To these the hospitable sage, in sign
Of social welcome, mix'd the racy wine,
(Late from the mellowing cask restor'd to light,
By ten long years refin'd, and rosy-bright.) 505
To Pallas high the foaming bowl he crown'd,
And sprinkled large libations on the ground.
Each drinks a full oblivion of his cares,
And to the gifts of balmy sleep repairs.
Deep in a rich alcove the prince was laid, 510
And slept beneath the pompous colonade;
Fast by his side Pisistratus lay spread,
(In age his equal) on a splendid bed:
But in an inner court, securely clos'd,
The rev'rend Nestor and his queen repos'd. 515

When now Aurora, daughter of the dawn,
With rosy lustre purpled o'er the lawn;
The old man early rose, walk'd forth, and sat
On polish'd stone before his palace gate:

V. 518. — — — *And sat on polish'd stone before his palace gate.*
We have here an ancient custom recorded by the poet; a king

With unguents smooth the lucid marble shone, 520
 Where ancient Neleus sat, a rustic throne;
 But he descending to th' infernal shade,
 Sage Nestor fill'd it, and the sceptre sway'd.
 His sons around him mild obeisance pay,
 And duteous take the orders of the day. 525
 First Echephron and Stratius quit their bed;
 Then Perseus, Aretus, and Thrasymed;
 The last Pisistratus arose from rest:
 They came, and near him plac'd the stranger-guest.

places himself before the gate of his palace upon a seat of marble, worn smooth by long use, says Eustathius, or perhaps smoothed exquisitely by the hand of the workman. What I would chiefly observe is, that they placed themselves thus in public for the dispatch of justice: we read in the scripture of judges 'sitting in the gate;' and that this procedure of Nestor was for that purpose, is probable from the expression, 'He sat in the seat where Neleus [*μνηστήρ*, or *Consiliarius*] used to sit,' (which seems to express his wisdom in the discharge of justice.) Nestor is also described as bearing his sceptre in his hand, which was never used but upon some act of regality, in the dispatch of justice, or other solemn occasions. Perhaps, says Dacier, these seats or thrones might be consecrated with oil, to draw a reverence to the seats of justice as by an act of religion; but I rather judge (adds she) that no more is meant than to express the shining of these thrones, they being undoubtedly made of marble.

V. 528. *Pisistratus*.] Would I indulge my fancy in a conjecture, I might suppose that the famous tyrant Pisistratus was descended, or borrowed his name from this son of Nestor. Herodotus informs us, as Eustathius observes, that all the Pisistrati were originally Pylians. If this be true, we have a very strong evidence that Homer is not all fiction, but that he celebrates the great men of those ages with reality, and only embellishes the true story with the ornaments of poetry.

To these the senior thus declar'd his will: 530
 My sons! the dictates of your sire fulfil.
 To Pallas, first of gods, prepare the feast,
 Who grac'd our rites, a more than mortal guest.
 Let onè, dispatchful, bid some swain to lead
 A well-fed bullock from the grassy mead; 535
 One seek the harbour where the vessels moor,
 And bring thy friends, Telemachus! ashore,
 (Leave only two the galley to attend)
 Another to Lacreus must we send,
 Artist divine, whose skilful hands unfold 540
 The victim's horn with circumfusile gold.
 The rest may here the pious duty share,
 And bid the handmaids for the feast prepare,
 The seats to range, the fragrant wood to bring,
 And limpid waters from the living spring. 545

V. 540. *Lacreus* — *artist divine*, &c.] The author of the Parallel quotes this passage to prove that Homer was ignorant of the mechanic arts: we have here, says he, a gilder with his anvil and hammer; but what occasion has he for an anvil and hammer in the art of a gilder? Boileau has excellently vindicated Homer from this objection, in his reflections upon Longinus; this gilder was a gold-beater: Nestor, we see, furnished the gold, and he beat it into leaves, so that he had occasion to make use of his anvil and hammer; the anvil was portable, because the work was not laborious. Our modern travellers assure us, that it is at this day the practice in the eastern regions, as in Persia, &c. for the artists in metals to carry about with them the whole implements of trade, to the house of the persons where they find employment; it is therefore a full vindication of Homer, to observe that the gold this artist used in gilding, was nothing but gold beat into fine leaves.

He said, and busy each his care bestow'd;
 Already at the gates the bullock low'd,
 Already came the Ithacensian crew,
 The dext'rous smith the tools already drew:
 His pond'rous hammer, and his anvil sound, 550
 And the strong tongs to turn the metal round.
 Nor was Minerva absent from the rite,
 She view'd her honours, and enjoy'd the sight.
 With rev'rend hand the king presents the gold,
 Which round th' intorted horns the gilder roll'd;
 So wrought, as Pallas might with pride behold. 556

V. 552. *Nor was Minerva absent* —] It may be asked in what sense Minerva can be said to come to the sacrifice? Eustathius answers, that the ancients finding the inclinations of men to be bent incontinently upon pleasures, to oblige them to use them moderately, distinguished times, ordained sacrifices, and representing the gods in the forms of men, brought them to use those pleasures with discretion; they taught them that the gods came down to their libations and sacrifices, to induce them to govern their conversation with reverence and modesty: thus Jupiter and the other gods in the *Iliad*, and Neptune in the *Odyssey*, are said to feast with the Ethiopians.

If I might be pardoned a conjecture, I would suppose, that Minerva may in another sense be said to come to the sacrifice; I mean by her image or statue: and what may seem to confirm this opinion, is what Diodorus relates in his third book concerning the above-mentioned Ethiopians; they carried about the statues of Jupiter and the other gods twelve days, during which time the gods were said to be gone to the Ethiopians: and if the gods may be said to come to the Ethiopians by their statues, why may not the same be said of Minerva, from the introduction of her statue among the Pylians? So that the appearance of the goddess may possibly mean the appearance of her statue.

Young Aretus from forth his bridal bow'r
 Brought the full laver, o'er their hands to pour,
 And canisters of consecrated flour.
 Stratius and Echephron the victim led; 560
 The ax was held by warlike Thrasymed,
 In act to strike: before him Perseus stood,
 The vase extending to receive the blood.
 The king himself initiates to the pow'r;
 Scatters with quiv'ring hand the sacred flour, 565
 And the stream sprinkles: from the curling brows
 The hair collected in the fire he throws.
 Soon as due vows on ev'ry part were paid,
 And sacred wheat upon the victim laid,
 Strong Thrasymed discharg'd the speeding blow 570
 Full on his neck, and cut the nerves in two.

V. 560. *Stratius and Echephron, &c.*] Nestor here makes use only of the ministry of his sons; the reason of it is, because it was reckoned honourable to serve in the performance of sacrifice, this being in some sense an attending upon the gods: or because it was the practice of those ages for great persons to do those offices with their own hands, which in the latter have been performed by servants.

Eustathius reports a saying of Antigonus, who observing his son behaving himself imperiously to his subjects, 'Know'st thou not,' says he, 'that royalty itself is but illustrious servitude!' An intimation that he himself was but a servant of the public, and therefore should use his servants with moderation.

But the true reason of Nestor's assisting in the sacrifice is, because kings anciently had the inspection of religion, and priesthood was joined to royalty, according to that of Virgil,

'Rex Anius, rex idem hominum Phœbique sacerdos.'

Down sunk the heavy beast: the females round,
 Maids, wives, and matrons, mix a shrilling sound.
 Nor scorn'd the queen the holy choir to join,
 (The first-born she, of old Clymenus' line; 575
 In youth by Nestor lov'd, of spotless fame,
 And lov'd in age, Eurydice her name.)
 From earth they rear him, struggling now with death;
 And Nestor's youngest stops the vents of breath.
 The soul for ever flies: on all sides round 580
 Streams the black blood, and smokes upon the ground.
 The beast they then divide, and disunite
 The ribs and limbs, observant of the rite:
 On these, in double cawls involv'd with art,
 The choicest morsels lay from ev'ry part. 585

V. 573. *Maids, wives, and matrons, mix a shrilling sound.*] I have kept the meaning of the word in the original, which signifies prayers made with loud cries, ολολυξεν. Ολολυγη, says Hesychius, is, φωνη γυναικων ην ποιειναι εν τοις ιεραις συχομεναι, 'the voice of women, which they make at sacrifices in their prayers.' But there is still something in it more to the present purpose; the scholiast upon *Aeschylus* remarks that this word is not used properly but when applied to the prayers offered to Minerva, for Minerva is the only goddess to whom prayers are made with loud cries, she being the goddess of war; to other deities they offer prayer with thanksgiving; και γαρ μνη τη Αθηνά δαιμονι εση πολεμικη ολολυζεσι, τοις δ' αλλοις Θεοις παιωνιζεσι.

Thus also in the sixth book of the *Iliad*, v. 301.

Αι δ' ολολυγη πασαι Αθηνη χειρας ανεσχον.

They fill the dome with supplicating cries.

And in the present passage in the *Odyssey*,

— — — — αι δ' ολολυξαν

Ουλατερς τε, νυσι τε, δευ.

DACIAR.

The sacred sage before his altar stands,
 Turns the burnt-offering with his holy hands,
 And pours the wine, and bids the flames aspire :
 The youth with instruments surround the fire.
 The thighs now sacrific'd, and entrails drest, 590
 Th' assistants part, transfix, and broil the rest.
 While these officious tend the rites divine,
 The last fair branch of the Nestorean line,
 Sweet Polycaste, took the pleasing toil
 To bathe the prince, and pour the fragrant oil. 595
 O'er his fair limbs a flow'ry vest he threw,
 And issu'd, like a god, to mortal view.
 His former seat beside the king he found,
 (His people's father with his peers around)

*V. 594. Sweet Polycaste, took the pleasing toil
 To bathe the prince, &c.]*

It is very necessary to say something about this practice of women bathing and anointing men; it frequently occurs through the whole Odyssey, and is so contrary to the usage of the moderns, as to give offence to modesty; neither is this done by women of inferior quality, but we have here a young princess bathing, anointing, and clothing the naked Telemachus. Eustathius indeed tells us, it was undoubtedly by her father's command: but if it was a piece of immodesty, it does not solve the objection, whoever commanded it. I confess it would be immodest in these ages of the world, and the only excuse that occurs to me is, to say that custom established it. It is in manners, in some degree, as in dress; if a fashion never so indecent prevails, yet no person is ridiculous, because it is fashionable: so in manners, if a practice prevails universally, though not reconcileable to real modesty, yet no person can be said to be immodest who comes into it, because it is agreeable to the custom of the times and countries.

All plac'd at ease the holy banquet join, 600
And in the dazzling goblet laughs the wine.

The rage of thirst and hunger now suppress,
The monarch turns him to his royal guest;
And for the promis'd journey bids prepare
The smooth-hair'd horses, and the rapid car. 605
Observant of his word; the word scarce spoke,
The sons obey, and join them to the yoke.
Then bread and wine a ready handmaid brings,
And presents, such as suit the state of kings.
The glitt'ring seat Telemachus ascends; 610
His faithful guide Pisistratus attends;

V. 610, &c. *The conclusion of the book.*] I shall lay together what I have further to observe on the conclusion of this book: it is remarkable, that the poet does not amuse himself in describing the present Telemachus received from Nestor, or the provisions for the journey, or even the journey itself at large; he dispatches the whole in a few lines very judiciously; he carries his hero directly to Menelaus, who is to furnish many incidents that contribute to the design of the poem, and passes over other matters as unnecessary.

We have likewise a piece of poetical geography, and learn that it is exactly two days journey from Pyle to Lacedæmon.

This book takes up three days; the first is spent in the inquiries Telemachus makes of Nestor concerning Ulysses; the two last in the morning sacrifice at Pylos, and in the journey of Telemachus to Lacedæmon; so that five days have now passed since the opening of the poem. I have said nothing about the sacrifice, though it be the most exact description of the sacrifices, as practised by the ancients, perhaps extant in any author; I refer to the observations upon the first book of the Iliad.

I would here remark that the three first books are written with the utmost simplicity, there has been no room for such exalted strokes

With hasty hand the ruling reins he drew:
He lash'd the coursers, and the coursers flew.
Beneath the bounding yoke alike they held
Their equal pace, and smok'd along the field. 615
The tow'rs of Pylos sink, its views decay,
Fields after fields fly back, till close of day:
Then sunk the sun, and darken'd all the way.

To Phææ now, Diocleus' stately seat,
(Of Alpheus' race) the weary youths retreat. 620
His house affords the hospitable rite,
And pleas'd they sleep (the blessing of the night.)
But when Aurora, daughter of the dawn,
With rosy lustre purpled o'er the lawn;
Again they mount, their journey to renew, 625
And from the sounding portico they flew.
Along the waving fields their way they hold,
The fields receding as the chariot roll'd:
Then slowly sunk the ruddy globe of light,
And o'er the shaded landscape rush'd the night. 630

of poetry as are to be found in the *Iliad*, or in the future parts of the *Odyssey*: but this is not owing to the decay of genius in Homer, as some critics have affirmed (who look upon the *Odyssey* as bearing marks of his declining years), but to the nature of the subject. The characters of Achilles and Ulysses are both very great, but very different. The *Iliad* consists of battles and a continual commotion; the *Odyssey* in patience and wisdom: and consequently the style of the two poems must be as different as the characters of the two heroes. A noble fountain of poetry opens in the next book, and flows with an uninterrupted course almost through the whole *Odyssey*.

THE
FOURTH BOOK
OF THE
ODYSSEY.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE CONFERENCE WITH MENELAUS.

TELEMACHUS with Pisistratus arriving at Sparta, is hospitably received by Menelaus, to whom he relates the cause of his coming, and learns from him many particulars of what befell the Greeks since the destruction of Troy. He dwells more at large upon the prophecies of Proteus to him in his return, from which he acquaints Telemachus, that Ulysses is detained in the Island of Calypso.

In the mean time the suitors consult to destroy Telemachus in his voyage home. Penelope is apprised of this, but comforted in a dream by Pallas, in the shape of her sister Iphima,

THE
ODYSSEY.

BOOK IV. *

AND now proud Sparta with their wheels resounds,
Sparta whose walls a range of hills surrounds:
At the fair dome the rapid labour ends;
Where sat Atrides 'midst his bridal friends,
With double vows invoking Hymen's pow'r, 5
To bless his sons and daughters nuptial hour.

* Aristotle in his Poetics reports, that certain ancient critics reproached Homer for an indecency in making Telemachus take his abode with Menelaus, and not with his own grandfather Icarius: this Monsieur Dacier sufficiently answers,* by shewing that Icarius had settled himself in Acarnania, and not in Lacedæmon.

V. 5. — *invoking Hymen's pow'r.*] Athenæus has been very severe upon this passage, as Eustathius observes, and Dacier from Eustathius.

Aristarchus, says Athenæus, misguides us, the words τοῦ δ' εὐφροδαιμονία led him into an error; whereas the marriage is completed, the wedded couple gone away from Menelaus, and he and Helen at Lacedæmon. The five verses, continues he, (the fifteenth to the twentieth inclusively in the Greek) are taken from the eighteenth book of the Iliad, and inserted very improperly in this place by Aristarchus. Athenæus gives several reasons for his opinion, as that music and dancing were very contrary to the severe manners of the

That day, to great Achilles' son resign'd,
Hermione, the fairest of her kind,

Lacedæmonians; besides the dance was a Cretan dance, how then could it be practised among the Spartans? The poet mentions neither the name of the bard, nor one word of the subject of the songs: neither can the words *μολπῆς ἐξερχόμεναι* be applied at all to the dancers, but to the musicians; and lastly, it is not to be imagined that Tele-machus and Pisistratus should be so unpolite, as not to be at all affected with the music, had there been any, and yet break out into such wonder at the sight of the beauty of the palace of Menelaus. Aristarchus, adds he, thought the description of the wedding of the son and daughter of a king was too meagrely and concisely described, and therefore made this addition.

But it is easy to refute Athenæus, and vindicate Aristarchus. Athenæus understood *πεμπε* and *ηγείναι* in the wrong tense; they are of the imperfect: *he was sending*, or *about to send*, and not *had sent*, &c. If the marriage had been absolutely finished, why should Minerva absent herself from Menelaus, when the celebration of the nuptials is the only reason of the absence of that goddess? And as for music and dancing being contrary to the severe manners of the Lacedæmonians, this is all conjecture: Menelaus lived more than three hundred years before Lysurgus; and because such diversions were for bid in Sparta in the days of Lysurgus, must it follow that they were not used in the days of Menelaus? And should it be granted that music and dancing were not used in his times, might he not relax a little from the severity of his times, upon such an occasion of joy as the marriage of a son and daughter? I am sure these diversions are not more contrary to the severity of the Spartans, than the magnificence of the palace of Menelaus was to their simplicity. 'But he does not name the bard, or the subject of his songs.' But is this a reason why the verses are spurious? We should rather admire the judgment of the poet, who having so fair an opportunity to describe these nuptials, yet rejects the temptation, dismisses the whole in a few lines, and follows where his subject leads him. The objection about the dance being Cretan is not more valid: Menelaus (as we may learn from the preceding book) had been in Crete, and might

Was sent to crown the long protracted joy,
 Espous'd before the final doom of Troy : 10
 With steeds and gilded cars, a gorgeous train
 Attend the nymph to Phthia's distant reign.
 Meanwhile at home, to Megapenthes' bed
 The virgin-choir Alector's daughter led.
 Brave Megapenthes, from a stol'n amour 15
 To great Atrides' age his handmaid bore :
 To Helen's bed the gods alone assign
 Hermione, t' extend the regal line ;
 On whom a radiant pomp of graces wait,
 Resembling Venus in attractive state. 20

While this gay friendly troop the king surround,
 With festival and mirth the roofs resound :
 A bard amid the joyous circle sings
 High airs, attemper'd to the vocal strings ;
 Whilst warbling to the varied strain, advance 25
 Two sprightly youths to form the bounding dance.

bring it thence to Lacedæmon. And as for the criticism upon *ἐξαρχοντες*, it is but a fallacy; Casaubon has shown beyond contradiction, that *ἐξαρχεῖν* is applied indifferently to all those who give example to others; and consequently may be applied to dancers as well as musicians. It may be further added, that although it should be allowed that the word *ἐξαρχεῖν* is only properly applied to music, yet in this place the word would not be improperly applied to dancers; for the dancers, without usurping upon the province of the singer, might *μολπῆς ἐξαρχεῖν*, or choose those songs to which they desired to dance, as is the usage at this day.

Diodorus is of opinion, that the whole twelve lines after the second to the fifteenth are not genuine; but what has been said of Athenæus, may be applied to Diodorus.

'Twas then, that issuing through the palace gate
 The splendid car roll'd slow in regal state:
 On the bright eminence young Nestor shone,
 And fast beside him great Ulysses' son : 30
 Grave Etconeus saw the pomp appear,
 And speeding, thus address'd the royal ear.

Two youths approach, whose semblant features prove
 Their blood devolving from the source of Jove.
 Is due reception deign'd, or must they bend 35
 Their doubtful course to seek a distant friend?

Insensate! (with a sigh the king replies)
 Too long, misjudging, have I thought thee wise:
 But sure relentless folly steels thy breast,
 Obdurate to reject the stranger-guest; 40
 To those dear hospitable rites a foe,
 Which in my wand'rings oft' reliev'd my woe:
 Fed by the bounty of another's board,
 Till pitying Jove my native realm restor'd—
 Straight be the coursers from the car releast, 45
 Conduct the youths to grace the genial feast.

V. 37. *Menelaus blames Etconeus.*] This is the first appearance of Menelaus; and surely nothing can more reconcile him to the favour of the spectators, than those amiable colours in which the poet paints him. There is an overflow of humanity and gratitude in his expressions, like that of Dido in Virgil,

'Non ignara mali miseris succurrere disco.'

They contain a fine piece of morality, and teach that those men are more tender-hearted and humane who have felt the reverse of fortune, than those who have only lived in a condition of prosperity.

The scenschal rebuk'd in haste withdrew;
With equal haste a menial train pursue:
Part led the coursers, from the car enlarg'd,
Each to a crib with choicest grain surcharg'd; 50
Part in a portico, profusely grac'd
With rich magnificence, the chariot plac'd!
Then to the dome the friendly pair invite,
Who eye the dazzling roofs with vast delight;
Resplendent as the blaze of summer-noon, 55
Or the pale radiance of the midnight moon.
From room to room their eager view they bend;
Thence to the bath, a beauteous pile, descend;
Where a bright damsel-train attend the guests
With liquid odours, and embroider'd vests. 60
Refresh'd, they wait them to the bow'r of state,
Where circled with his peers Atrides sat:
Thron'd next the king, a fair attendant brings
The purest product of the crystal springs;
High on a massy vase of silver mould, 65
The burnish'd laver flames with solid gold:
In solid gold the purple vintage flows,
And on the board a second banquet rose.
When thus the king with hospitable port:—
Accept this welcome to the Spartan court; 70
The waste of nature let the feast repair,
Then your high lineage and your names declare:
Say from what scepter'd ancestry ye claim,
Recorded eminent in deathless fame?

For vulgar parents cannot stamp their race 75
With signatures of such majestic grace.

Ceasing, benevolent he straight assigns
The royal portion of the choicest chimes
To each accepted friend: with grateful haste
They share the honours of the rich repast. 80
Suffic'd, soft-whispering thus to Nestor's son,
His head reclin'd, young Ithacus begun.

View'st thou unmov'd, O ever-honour'd most!
These prodigies of art, and wond'rous cost!
Above, beneath, around the palace shines 85
The sunless treasure of exhausted mines:
The spoils of elephants the roofs inlay,
And studded amber darts a golden ray:
Such, and not nobler, in the realms above
My wonder dictates is the dome of Jove. 90

The monarch took the word, and grave reply'd.
Presumptuous are the vaunts, and vain the pride

V. 81. *Soft-whispering thus to Nestor's son.*] This may be thought a circumstance of no importance, and very trivial in Telemachus; but it shews his address and decency: he whispers, to avoid the appearance of a flatterer, or to conceal his own inexperience, in showing too much surprise at the magnificence of the palace of Menelaus. EUSTATHIUS.

V. 91. *The monarch took the word, &c.*] The ancients, says Eustathius, observe the prudence of Menelaus, in his reply to Telemachus; and the prudence of Telemachus in his behaviour to Menelaus: Menelaus denies not his riches and magnificence; but to take off the envy which they might attract, he throws the calamities he has undergone into the contrary scale, and balances his felicity with

Of man, who dares in pomp with Jove contest,
 Unchang'd, immortal, and supremely blest!
 With all my affluence when my woes are weigh'd,
 Envy will own, the purchase dearly paid. 96
 For eight slow-circling years by tempest tost,
 From Cyprus to the far Phœnician coast,
 (Sidon the capital) I stretch'd my toil
 Through regions fatten'd with the flows of Nile. 100
 Next, Ethiopia's utmost bound explore,
 And the parch'd borders of th' Arabian shore;

his misfortunes: and Telemachus coming into the palace at the time of an entertainment, chooses to satisfy his curiosity rather than his appetite. *Plutarch, I confess, condemns Telemachus of inexperience;* who when he saw the palace of Nestor furnished only with things useful to life, as beds, tables, &c. is seized with no admiration; but the superfluities of Menelaus, his ivory, amber, and gold, &c. carry him into transports: whereas a Socrates or a Diogenes would have exclaimed, What heaps of vanities have I beheld! It is true, such a judgment might become philosophers; but who, as Dacier observes, can think the character of a Socrates or a Diogenes suitable to young Telemachus? What is decent in a prince, and a young man, would ill become the gravity and wisdom of a philosopher.

•V. 100. *Through regions fatten'd with the flows of Nile.*

Next, Ethiopia, &c.]

The words are in the original *Αργυπίης επαληθείς*, others read them *Λιγυπίας ἐπ' αληθείς*, from their veracity in oracles, for which they were very famous; and indeed the word *επαληθείς* is not necessary, it being used in the very same sentence, though it must be confessed such repetitions are frequent in Homer. There is also a different reading of the word *ερεμνές*; some have it *ερεμνός*, or blacks; others, *Ζιδονίης, Αραβίας τε*; but the common reading is thought the best. The Erembi are the Arabian Troglodytes. Strabo informs us, that

For vulgar parents cannot stamp their race 75
With signatures of such majestic grace.

Ceasing, benevolent he straight assigns
The royal portion of the choicest chimes
To each accepted friend: with grateful haste
They share the honours of the rich repast. 80
Suffic'd, soft-whispering thus to Nestor's son,
His head reclin'd, young Ithacus begun.

View'st thou unmov'd, O ever-honour'd most!
These prodigies of art, and wond'rous cost!
Above, beneath, around the palace shines 85
The sunless treasure of exhausted mines:
The spoils of elephants the roofs inlay,
And studded amber darts a golden ray:
Such, and not nobler, in the realms above
My wonder dictates is the dame of Jove. 90

The monarch took the word, and grave reply'd.
Presumptuous are the vaunts, and vain the pride

V. 81. *Soft-whispering thus to Nestor's son.*] This may be thought a circumstance of no importance, and very trivial in Telemachus; but it shews his address and decency: he whispers, to avoid the appearance of a flatterer, or to conceal his own inexperience, in shewing too much surprise at the magnificence of the palace of Menelaus. EUSTATHIUS.

V. 91. *The monarch took the word, &c.*] The ancients, says Eustathius, observe the prudence of Menelaus, in his reply to Telemachus; and the prudence of Telemachus in his behaviour to Menelaus: Menelaus denies not his riches and magnificence; but to take off the envy which they might attract, he throws the calamities he has undergone into the contrary scale, and balances his felicity with

Of man, who dares in pomp with Jove contest,
 Unchang'd, immortal, and supremely blest!
 With all my affluence when my woes are weigh'd,
 Envy will own, the purchase dearly paid. 96
 For eight slow-circling years by tempest tost,
 From Cyprus to the far Phœnician coast,
 (Sidon the capital) I stretch'd my toil
 Through regions fatten'd with the flows of Nile. 100
 Next, Ethiopia's utmost bound explore,
 And the parch'd borders of th' Arabian shore:

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Then warp my voyage on the southern gales,
 O'er the warm Libyan wave to spread my sails:
 That happy clime! where each revolving year 105
 The teeming ewes a triple offspring bear;
 And two fair crescents of translucent horn
 The brows of all their young increase adorn:

in former ages the bounds of the Ethiopians lay near to Thebes in Egypt, so that Menelaus travelling to Thebes, might with ease visit the Ethiopians. Others have without any foundation imagined that he passed the straits of Gibraltar, and sailed to the Indies. Sidon is the capital of the Phœnicians. EUSTATHIUS.

V. 105. — — — *where each revolving year*
The teeming ewes, &c.]

These sheep, as described by Homer, may be thought the creation of the poet, and not the production of nature: but Herodotus, says Eustathius, writes, that in Scythia the oxen have no horns through the extremity of the cold: he quotes this very verse, rightly intimating, adds Herodotus, that in hot regions the horns of cattle shoot very speedily. Aristotle directly asserts, that in Libya the young ones of horned cattle have horns immediately after they are brought into the world. So that Aristotle and Herodotus vindicate Homer. The poet adds, that the sheep breed three times in the year; these words may have a different interpretation, and imply that they breed in three seasons of the year, and not only in the spring, as in other countries; or that the sheep have at once three lambs; but the first is the better interpretation. Athenæus upon this passage writes, that there are things in other countries no less strange than what Homer relates of these sheep of Libya. Thus in Lusitania, a country of Spain, now Portugal, there is a wonderful fruitfulness in all cattle, by reason of the excellent temper of the air; the fruits there never rot, and the roses, violets, and asparagus, never fail above three months in the year. EUSTATHIUS.

The shepherd swains with sure abundance blest,
 On the fat flock and rural dainties feast; 110
 Nor want of herbage makes the dairy fail,
 But every season fills the foaming pail.
 Whilst heaping unwish'd wealth, I distant roam;
 The best of brothers, at his natal home,
 By the dire fury of a traitress wife, 115
 Ends the sad evening of a stormy life:
 Whence with incessant grief my soul annoy'd,
 These riches are possess'd, but not enjoy'd!
 My wars, the copious theme of ev'ry tongue,
 To you, your fathers have recorded long: 120

V. 114. *The best of brothers,——
 —— a traitress wife.*]

Menelaus neither mentions Agamemnon, Clytemnestra, nor Ægysthus, by name; a just indignation and resentment is the occasion of his suppressing the names of Clytemnestra and Ægysthus. Through the whole Iliad Menelaus is described as a very affectionate brother, and the love he bears Agamemnon is the reason why he passes by his name in silence. We see that he dispatches the whole in one verse and a half; Nestor had told the story pretty largely in the preceding book, and as he was a person less nearly concerned, might speak of it with more ease and better temper than Menelaus; the poet avoids a needless repetition, and a repetition too of a story universally known to all the Greeks. The death of Agamemnon is distributed into four places in the Odyssey; Nestor, Menelaus, Proteus, and the shade of Agamemnon in the eleventh book, all relate it, and every one very properly. Proteus as a prophet more fully than Nestor and Menelaus, and Agamemnon more fully than them all, as being best acquainted with it. EUSTATHIUS.

V. 119. *My wars, the copious theme, &c.*] In the original Menelaus says, 'I have destroyed a house, &c.' There is an ambiguity in
 VOL. I. L

How fav'ring heav'n repaid my glorious toils
 With a sack'd palace, and barbaric spoils.
 Oh! had the gods so large a boon deny'd,
 And life, the just equivalent, supply'd
 To those brave warriors, who with glory fir'd, 125
 Far from their country in my cause expir'd!
 Still in short intervals of pleasing woe,
 Regardful of the friendly dues I owe,
 I to the glorious dead, for ever dear!
 Indulge the tribute of a grateful tear. 130
 But oh! Ulysses — deeper than the rest
 That sad idea wounds my anxious breast!

the expression, as Eustathius observes: for it may either signify the house of Priam, or his own in Argos; if it be understood of his own, then the meaning is, 'I have indeed great wealth, but have purchased it with the loss of my people; I could be content with the third part of it, if I could restore those to life who have perished before Troy.' If it be understood of the kingdom of Priam, the regret he shews will still appear the greater. He is enumerating his domestic happiness, and his foreign conquest of Troy; but he throws the destruction of so many brave men who fell before it, in the contrary scale; and it so far outweighs both his wealth and his glory, that they both are joyless to him. Either of these interpretations shew an excellent temper of humanity in Menelaus, who thinks the effusion of blood too dear a price for glory. At the same time the poet gives an admirable picture of human nature, which is restless in the pursuit of what it miscalls happiness, and when in possession of it, neglects it. But the disquiet of Menelaus arises not from inconsistency of temper, but wisdom; it shews that all happiness is unsatisfactory.

V. 131. *But oh! Ulysses — &c.*] It is with admirable address that the poet falls into his subject: it is art, but it seems to be nature:

My heart bleeds fresh with agonizing pain ;
 The bowl, and tasteful viands tempt in vain,
 Nor sleep's soft pow'r can close my streaming eyes,
 When imag'd to my soul his sorrows rise. 136
 No peril in my cause he ceas'd to prove,
 His labours equall'd only by my love :
 And both alike to bitter fortune born,
 For him, to suffer, and for me to mourn ! 140
 Whether he wanders on some friendly coast,
 Or glides in Stygian gloom a pensive ghost,
 No fame reveals ; but doubtful of his doom,
 His good old sire with sorrow to the tomb
 Declines his trembling steps ; untimely care 145
 Withers the blooming vigour of his heir ;
 And the chaste partner of his bed and throne,
 Wastes all her widow'd hours in tender moan.

While thus pathetic to the prince he spoke,
 From the brave youth the streaming passion broke :

this conduct has a double effect, it takes away all suspicion of flattery, for Menelaus is ignorant that the person with whom he discourses is Telemachus ; this gives him a manifest evidence of the love he bears to Ulysses ; the young man could not but be pleased with the praise of his father, and with the sincerity of it. It is also observable, that Menelaus builds his friendship for Ulysses upon a noble foundation ; I mean the sufferings which Ulysses underwent for his friend : Menelaus ascribes not their affection to any familiarity or intercourse of entertainments, but to a more sincere cause, to the hazards which brave men undertake for a friend. In short, the friendship of Menelaus and Ulysses is the friendship of heroes. EUSTATHIUS.

Studious to veil the grief, in vain repress, 151
 His face he shrouded with his purple vest :
 The conscious monarch pierc'd the coy disguise,
 And view'd his filial love with vast surprise :
 Dubious to press the tender theme, or wait 155
 To hear the youth inquire his father's fate.

In this suspense bright Helen grac'd the room ;
 Before her breath'd a gale of rich perfume,

V. 157. — — — — *bright Helen grac'd the room.*] Menelaus conjectured that the person he had entertained was the son of Ulysses, from the tears he shed at the name of his father, and from the resemblance there was between Ulysses and Telemachus; it might therefore have been expected that Menelaus should immediately have acknowledged Telemachus, and not delayed a full discovery one moment, out of regard to his absent friend, but Menelaus defers it upon a twofold account, to give some time to Telemachus to indulge his sorrow for his father, and recover himself from it, and also to avoid the repetition of a discovery upon the appearance of Helen, who would be curious to know the condition of the strangers.

It may be necessary to say something concerning Helen, that fatal beauty that engaged Greece and Asia in arms; she is drawn in the same colours in the *Odyssey* as in the *Iliad*; it is a vicious character, but the colours are so admirably softened by the art of the poet, that we pardon her infidelity. Menelaus is an uncommon instance of conjugal affection, he forgives a wife who had been false to him, and receives her into a full degree of favour. But perhaps the reader might have been shocked at it, and prejudiced against Helen as a person that ought to be forgot, or have her name only mentioned to disgrace it: the poet therefore, to reconcile her to his reader, brings her in as a penitent, condemning her own infidelity in very strong expressions; she shews true modesty, when she calls herself impudent, and by this conduct we are inclined, like Menelaus, to forgive her.

So moves, adorn'd with each attractive grace,
 The silver-shafted goddess of the chace! 160
 The seat of majesty Adraste brings,
 With art illustrious, for the pomp of kings.
 To spread the pall (beneath the regal chair)
 Of softest woof, is bright Alcippe's care.
 A silver canister divinely wrought, 165
 In her soft hands the beauteous Phylo brought:
 To Sparta's queen of old the radiant vase
 Alcandra gave, a pledge of royal grace:
 For Polybus her lord, (whose sov'reign sway
 The wealthy tribes of Pharian Thebes obey) 170
 When to that court Atrides came, carest
 With vast munificence th' imperial guest:
 Two lavers from the richest ore refin'd,
 With silver tripods, the kind host assign'd;
 And bounteous, from the royal treasure told 175
 Ten equal talents of refulgent gold.
 Alcandra, consort of his high command,
 A golden distaff gave to Helen's hand;
 And that rich vase, with living sculpture wrought,
 Which heap'd with wool the beauteous Phylo brought:

V. 161. &c. *Adraste, Alcippe, Helen's maids.*] It has been observed, that Helen has not the same attendants in the Odyssey as she had in the Iliad; they perhaps might be Trojans, and consequently be left in their own country: or rather, it was an act of prudence in Menelaus, not to suffer those servants about her who had been her attendants and confidants in her infidelity. EUSTATHIUS.

The silken fleece impurpled for the loom, 181
 Rival'd the hyacinth in vernal bloom.

The sov'reign seat then Jove-born Helen press'd,
 And pleasing thus her scepter'd lord address'd :

Who grace our palace now, that friendly pair, 185
 Speak they their lineage, or their names declare?

Uncertain of the truth, yet uncontroll'd
 Hear me the bodings of my breast unfold.

With wonder wrapt, on yonder cheek I trace
 The feature of the Ulyssean race; 190

Diffus'd o'er each resembling line appear,

In just similitude, the grace and air

Of young Telemachus! the lovely boy,

Who bless'd Ulysses with a father's joy,

What time the Greeks combin'd their social arms,
 T' avenge the stain of my ill-fated charms! 196

Just is thy thought, the king assenting cries,

Methinks Ulysses strikes my wond'ring eyes :

Full shines the father in the filial frame,

His port, his features, and his shape the same ; 200

V. 192. — — — — *the grace and air*

Of young Telemachus!

It may seem strange that Helen should at first view recollect the features of Ulysses in Telemachus; and that Menelaus, who was better acquainted with him, and his constant friend, should not make the same observation. But Athenæus, to reconcile this to probability, says, that women are curious and skilful observers of the likeness of children to parents, for one particular reason, that they may, upon finding any dissimilitude, have the pleasure of hinting at the unchastity of others.

Such quick regards his sparkling eyes bestow ;
 Such wavy ringlets o'er his shoulders flow !
 And when he heard the long disastrous store
 Of cares, which in my cause Ulysses bore ;
 Dismay'd, heart-wounded with paternal woes, 205
 Above restraint the tide of sorrow rose :
 Cautious to let the gushing grief appear,
 His purple garment veil'd the falling tear.

See there confess'd, Pisistratus replies,
 The genuine worth of Ithacus the wise ! 210
 Of that heroic sire the youth is sprung,
 But modest awe hath chain'd his tim'rous tongue.
 Thy voice, O king ! with pleas'd attention heard,
 Is like the dictates of a god rever'd.
 With him at Nestor's high command I came, 215
 Whose age I honour with a parent's name.
 By adverse destiny constrain'd to sue
 For counsel and redress, he sues to you.
 Whatever ill the friendless orphan bears,
 Bereav'd of parents in his infant years, 220
 Still must the wrong'd Telcmachus sustain,
 If hopeful of your aid, he hopes in vain :
 Affanc'd in your friendly pow'r alone,
 The youth would vindicate the vacant throne.

In Sparta bless'd, and these desiring eyes 225
 View my friend's son ? (the king exulting cries)
 Son of my friend, by glorious toils approv'd,
 Whose sword was sacred to the man he lov'd :

Mirror of constant faith, rever'd, and mourn'd!—
When Troy was ruin'd, had the chief return'd, 230
No Greek an equal space had e'er possess'd,
Of dear affection, in my grateful breast.
I, to confirm the mutual joys we shar'd,
For his abode a capital prepar'd;
Argos the seat of sov'reign rule I chose; 235
Fair in the plan the future palace rose,
Where my Ulysses and his race might reign,
And portion to his tribes the wide domain.
To them my vassals had resign'd a soil,
With teeming plenty to reward their toil. 240
There with commutual zeal we both had strove
In acts of dear benevolence, and love:
Brothers in peace, not rivals in command,
And death alone dissolv'd the friendly band!
Some envious pow'r the blissful scene destroys; 245
Vanish'd are all the visionary joys:
The soul of friendship to my hope is lost,
Fated to wander from his natal coast!

He ceas'd; a gust of grief began to rise:
Fast streams a tide from beauteous Helen's eyes;

V. 234. *For his abode a capital prepar'd.*] The poet puts these words in the mouth of Menelaus, to express the sincerity of his friendship to Ulysses; he intended him all advantage, and no detriment: we must therefore conclude, that Ulysses was still to retain his sovereignty over Ithaca, and only remove to Argos, to live with so sincere a friend as Menelaus. EUSTATHIUS.

Book IV. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 153

Fast for the sire the filial sorrows flow; 251

The weeping monarch swells the mighty woe:

Thy cheeks, Pisistratus, the tears bedew,

While pictur'd to thy mind appear'd in view

Thy martial * brother: on the Phrygian plain 255

Extended pale, by swarthy Memnon slain!

But silence soon the son of Nestor broke,

And melting with fraternal pity spoke.

Frequent, O king, was Nestor wont to raise

And charm attention with thy copious praise: 260

To crown thy various gifts the sage assign'd

The glory of a firm capacious mind:

With that superior attribute controul

This unavailing impotence of soul.

V. 249. — — — *a gust of grief began to rise, &c.*] It has been observed through the Iliad, and may be observed through the whole Odyssey, that it was not a disgrace to the greatest heroes to shed tears; and indeed I cannot see why it should be an honour to any man, to be able to divest himself of human nature so far as to appear insensible upon the most affecting occasions. No man is born a stoic: it is art, not nature; tears are only a shame, when the cause from whence they flow is mean or vicious. Here Menelaus laments a friend, Telemachus a father, Pisistratus a brother: but from what cause arise the tears of Helen? It is to be remembered that Helen is drawn in the softest colours in the Odyssey; the character of the adulteress is lost in that of the penitent: the name of Ulysses throws her into tears, because she is the occasion of all the sufferings of that brave man; the poet makes her the first in sorrow, as she is the cause of all their tears.

* Antilochus.

Let not your roof with echoing grief resound, 265
 Now for the feast the friendly bowl is crown'd:
 But when from dewy shade emerging bright,
 Aurora streaks the sky with orient light,
 Let each deplore his dead: the rites of woe
 Are all, alas! the living can bestow: 270
 O'er the congenial dust enjoin'd to shear
 The graceful curl, and drop the tender tear.
 Then mingling in the mournful pomp with you,
 I'll pay my brother's ghost a warrior's due,
 And mourn the brave Antilochus, a name 275
 Not unrecorded in the rolls of fame:
 With strength and speed superior form'd, in fight
 To face the foe, or intercept his flight:
 Too early snatch'd by fate ere known to me!
 I boast a witness of his worth in thee. 280

V. 265. *Let not your roof with echoing grief resound,
 Now for the feast the friendly bowl is crown'd.]*

It may be asked why sorrow for the dead should be more unseasonable in the evening than the morning? Eustathius answers, lest others should look upon our evening tears as the effect of wine, and not of love to the dead.

' Intempestivus venit inter pocula fletus,
 Nec lacrymas dulci fas est miscere falerno.'

I fancy there may be a more rational account given of this expression; the time of feasting was ever looked upon as a time of joy and thanksgiving to the gods; it bore a religious veneration among the ancients, and consequently to shed tears when they should express their gratitude to the gods with joy, was esteemed a profanation.

Young and mature! the monarch thus rejoins,
 In thee renew'd the soul of Nestor shines:
 Form'd by the care of that consummate sage,
 In early bloom an oracle of age.
 Whene'er his influence Jove vouchsafes to show'r
 To bless the natal, and the nuptial hour; 286
 From the great sire transmissive to the race,
 The boon devolving gives distinguish'd grace.
 Such, happy Nestor! was thy glorious doom:
 Around thee full of years, thy offspring bloom, 290
 Expert of arms, and prudent in debate;
 The gifts of heav'n to guard thy hoary state.
 But now let each becalm his troubled breast,
 Wash, and partake serene the friendly feast.
 To move thy suit, Telemachus, delay, 295
 Till heav'n's revolving lamp restores the day.

He said, Asphalion swift the laver brings;
 Alternate all partake the grateful springs:
 Then from the rites of purity repair,
 And with keen gust the sav'ry viands share. 300
 Meantime with genial joy to warm the soul,
 Bright Helen mix'd a mirth-inspiring bowl:

V. 302. *Bright Helen mix'd a mirth-inspiring bowl, &c.*] The conjectures about this cordial of Helen have been almost infinite. Some take Nepenthes allegorically, to signify history, music, or philosophy. Plutarch in the first of the Symposiacks affirms it to be, discourse well suiting the present passions and conditions of the hearers, Macrobius is of the same opinion, ' Delinimentum illud quod Helena vino miscuit, non herba fuit, non ex Indiâ succus, sed narrandi op-

Temper'd with drugs of sov'reign use, t' assuage
The boiling bosom of tumultuous rage;

portunitas, quæ hospitem mœroris oblitum flexit ad gaudium.' What gave a foundation to this fiction of Homer, as Dacier observes, might be this. Diodorus writes that in Egypt, and chiefly at Heliopolis, the same with Thebes, where Menelaus sojourned, as has been already observed, there lived women who boasted of certain potions, which not only made the unfortunate forget all their calamities, but drove away the most violent sallies of grief or anger. Eusebius directly affirms, that even in his time the women of Diospolis were able to calm the rage of grief or anger by certain potions. Now whether this be truth or fiction, it fully vindicates Homer, since a poet may make use of a prevailing, though false opinion.

Milton mentions this *Nepenthes* in his excellent mask of *Comus*.

— — — Behold this cordial julep here,
That flames and dances in his crystal bounds!
Not that *Nepenthes* which the wife of Thone
In Egypt gave to Jove-born Helena,
Is of such pow'r as this to stir up joy,
To life so friendly, or so cool to thirst.

But that there may be something more than fiction in this is very probable, since the Egyptians were so notoriously skilled in physic; and particularly since this very Thon, or Thonis, or Thoon, is reported by the ancients to have been the inventor of physic among the Egyptians. The description of this *Nepenthes* agrees admirably with what we know of the qualities and effects of opium.

It is further said of Thon, that he was king of Canopus, and entertained Menelaus hospitably before he had seen Helen; but afterwards falling in love with her, and offering violence, he was slain by Menelaus. From his name the Egyptians gave the name of Thoth to the first month of their year, and also to a city the name of Thonis. *Ælian* writes, that Menelaus, when he travelled to the Ethiopians, committed Helen to the protection of Thonis; that she fell in love with him, that Polydamna growing jealous confined her to the island of Pharos, but gave her an herb to preserve her from the poison of

To clear the cloudy front of wrinkled care, 305
 And dry the tearful sluices of despair:
 Charm'd with that virtuous draught, th' exalted mind
 All sense of woe delivers to the wind.
 Though on the blazing pile his parent lay,
 Or a lov'd brother groan'd his life away, 310
 Or darling son, oppress'd by ruffian-force,
 Fell breathless at his feet, a mangled corse;
 From morn to eve, impassive and serene,
 The man entranc'd would view the deathful scene.
 These drugs, so friendly to the joys of life, 315
 Bright Helen learn'd from Thone's imperial wife;
 Who sway'd the sceptre, where prolific Nile
 With various simples clothes the fat'n'd soil.
 With wholesome herbage mix'd, the direful bane
 Of vegetable venom, taints the plain; 320
 From Pæon sprung, their patron-god imparts
 To all the Pharian race his healing arts.

serpents, there frequent, which from Helen was called Helenium. Strabo writes, that at Canopus, on the mouth of the Nile, there stands a city named Thonies, from king Thonis, who received Helen and Menelaus. Herodotus relates, that Thonis was governor of Canopus, that he represented the injury which Paris had done to Menelaus, to Proteus who reigned in Memphis. EUSTATHIUS.

This last remark from Herodotus is sufficient to shew, that Homer is not so fictitious as is generally imagined, that there really was a king named Proteus, that the poet builds his fables upon truth, and that it was truth that originally determined Homer to introduce Proteus into his poetry; but I intend to explain this more largely in the story of Proteus.

The bev'rage now prepar'd t' inspire the feast,
The circle thus the beauteous queen address.

Thron'd in omnipotence, supremest Jove 325
Tempers the fates of human race above;
By the firm sanction of his sov'reign will,
Alternate are decreed our good and ill.
To feastful mirth be this white hour assign'd,
And sweet discourse, the banquet of the mind. 330
Myself assisting in the social joy,
Will tell Ulysses' bold exploit in Troy:
Sole witness of the deed I now declare;
Speak you (who saw) his wonders in the war.

Scam'd o'er with wounds, which his own sabre gave,
In the vile habit of a village slave, 336

V. 331. *Myself* — — — —

Will tell Ulysses' bold exploit — —]

What is here related shews the necessity of the introduction of Helen, and the use the poet makes of it: she is not brought in merely as a *muta persona*, to fill up the number of persons; but she relates several incidents, in which she herself was concerned, and which she could only know; and consequently not only diversifies, but carries on the design of the story. EUSTATHIUS.

V. 335. *Scam'd o'er with wounds, &c.*] The poet here shews his judgment in passing over many instances of the sufferings of Ulysses, and relating this piece of conduct, not mentioned by any other author. The art of Ulysses in extricating himself from difficulties is laid down as the ground-work of the poem, he is πολυτροπος, and this is an excellent example of it. This further shews the necessity of the appearance of Helen, no other person being acquainted with the story. If this stratagem be not a reality, yet it bears the resemblance of it; and Megabysus the Persian (as Eustathius observes)

The foe deceiv'd, he pass'd the tented plain,
In Troy to mingle with the hostile train.
In this attire secure from searching eyes,
Till haply piercing through the dark disguise 340
The chief I challeng'd; he, whose practis'd wit
Knew all the serpent-mazes of deceit,
Eludes my search: but when his form I view'd
Fresh from the bath with fragrant oils renew'd,
His limbs in military purple dress'd; 345
Each bright'ning grace the genuine Greek confess'd.
A previous pledge of sacred faith obtain'd,
Till he the lines and Argive fleet regain'd,

practised it, as we learn from history. We may reasonably conjecture that Ulysses was committed to Helen, in hopes that he would discover the affairs of the army more freely to her than any other person; for what could be more agreeable to a Greek, than to be committed to the care of a Greek, as Ulysses was to Helen? By the same conduct the poet raises the character of Helen, by making her shew her repentance by an act of generosity to her countryman. The original says she gave an oath to Ulysses not to discover him before he was in safety in the Grecian army: now this does not imply that she ever discovered to the Trojans that Ulysses had entered Troy: the contrary opinion is most probable; for it cannot be imagined but all Troy must have been incensed greatly against her, had they known that she had concealed one of their mortal enemies, and dismissed him in safety: it was sufficient for Ulysses to take her oath that she would not discover him, till he was in security: he left her future conduct to her own discretion. It is probable that she furnished Ulysses with a sword, for in his return he slew many Trojans: he came to Troy, observes Eustathius, in rags, and like a slave; and to have concealed a sword, would have endangered his life upon a discovery of it, and given strong suspicions of an impostor.

To keep his stay conceal'd; the chief declar'd
 The plans of war against the town prepar'd. 350
 Exploring then the secrets of the state,
 He learn'd what best might urge the Dardan fate:
 And safe returning to the Grecian host,
 Sent many a shade to Pluto's dreary coast.
 Loud grief resounded through the tow'rs of Troy,
 But my pleas'd bosom glow'd with secret joy: 356
 For then with dire remorse, and conscious shame,
 I view'd th' effects of that disastrous flame,
 Which kindled by th' imperious queen of love,
 Constrain'd me from my native realm to rove: 360

V. 351. *Exploring then the secrets of the state.*] The word *ῥηγῶν* is here used in a large sense: it takes in all the observations Ulysses made during his continuance in Troy, it takes in the designs and counsels of the enemy, his measuring the gates, the height of the walls, the easiest place for an assault or ambush, the taking away the palladium, or whatever else a wise man may be supposed to observe, or act, in execution of such a stratagem. EUSTATHIUS.

V. 357. *For then with dire remorse, &c.*] The conclusion of this speech is very artful: Helen ascribes her seduction to Venus, and mentions nothing of Paris. Instead of naming Troy, she conceals it, and only says she was carried thither, leaving Troy to the imagination of Menelaus; she suffers not herself to mention names so odious now to herself, and ever to Menelaus, as Paris and Troy. She compliments Menelaus very handsomely, and says, that he wanted no accomplishment either in mind or body: it being the nature of man not to resent the injuries of a wife so much upon the account of her being corrupted, but of the preference she gives to another person; he looks upon such a preference as the most affecting part of the injury. EUSTATHIUS.

And oft in bitterness of soul deplor'd
 My absent daughter, and my dearer lord;
 Admir'd among the first of human race,
 For ev'ry gift of mind, and manly grace. 364

Right well, reply'd the king, your speech displays
 The matchless merit of the chief you praise:
 Heroes in various climes myself have found,
 For martial deeds, and depth of thought renown'd:
 But Ithacus, unrivall'd in his claim,
 May boast a title to the loudest fame: 370
 In battle calm, he guides the rapid storm,
 Wise to resolve, and patient to perform.
 What wond'rous conduct in the chief appear'd,
 When the vast fabric of the steed we rear'd!
 Some dæmon anxious for the Trojan doom, 375
 Urg'd you with great Deiphobus to come,

V. 365. *Meneleus's answer.*] The judgment of the poet in continuing the story concerning Ulysses is not observed by any commentator. Ulysses is the chief hero of the poem, every thing should have a reference to him, otherwise the narration stands still without any advance towards the conclusion of it. The poet therefore, to keep Ulysses in our minds, dwells upon his sufferings and adventures: he supplies his not appearing in the present scene of action, by setting his character before us, and continually forcing his prudence, patience, and valour, upon our observation. He uses the same art and judgment with relation to Achilles in the Iliad: the hero of the poem is absent from the chief scenes of action during much of the time which that poem comprises, but he is continually brought into the mind of the reader, by recounting his exploits and glory.

V. 375. *Some dæmon anxious for the Trojan doom.*] It is the observation of Eustathius, that these words are very artfully introduced

T' explore the fraud; with guile oppos'd to guile,
 Slow-pacing thrice around th' insidious pile;
 Each noted leader's name you thrice invoke,
 Your accent varying as their spouses spoke: 380

to vindicate Helen; they imply that what she acted was by compulsion, and to evidence this more clearly, Deiphobus is given her for an attendant, as a spy upon her actions, that she might not conceal any thing that should happen, but act her part well, by endeavouring to deceive the Greeks in favour of Troy. It is the dæmon, not Helen, that is in fault; this, continues Eustathius, answers many objections that lie against Helen: for if she was a real penitent, as she herself affirms, how comes she to endeavour to deceive the Greeks by the disguise of her voice, into more misery than had yet arisen from a ten years war? Or indeed is it credible that any person could modulate her voice so artfully as to resemble so many voices? And how could the Greeks inclosed in the wooden horse believe that their wives who were in Greece, could be arrived in so short a space as they had been concealed there, from the various regions of Greece, and meet together in Troy? Would the wives of these heroes come into an enemy's country, when the whole army, except these latent heroes, were retired from it? this is ridiculous and impossible. I must confess there is great weight in these objections: but Eustathius answers all by the interposition of the dæmon; and by an idle tradition that Helen had the name of Echo, from the faculty of mimicking sounds; and that this gift was bestowed upon her by Venus when she married Menelaus, that she might be able to detect him, if he should prove false to her bed, by imitating the voice of the suspected person, (but Menelaus had more occasion for this faculty than Helen.) As for the excuse of the dæmon, it equally excuses all crimes: for instance, was Helen false to Menelaus? The dæmon occasioned it: does she act an impostor to destroy all her Grecian friends, and even Menelaus? The dæmon compels her to it: the dæmon compels her to go with Deiphobus, to surround the horse thrice, to sound the sides of it, to endeavour to surprise the latent Greeks by an imitation

The pleasing sounds each latent warrior warm'd,
But most Tydides' and my heart alarm'd:

of the voices of their wives, and, in short, to act like a person that was very sincere in mischief.

Dacier takes another course, and gives up Helen, but remarks the great address of Menelaus. Helen had, said she, long desired nothing so much as to return to Lacedæmon; and her heart had long been wholly turned to Menelaus: Menelaus is not at all convinced of this pretended sincerity; but it would have been too gross, after he had taken her again to his bed, to convict her of falsehood: he therefore contents himself barely to reply, that some dæmon, an enemy to the Greeks, had forced her to a conduct disagreeable to her sincerity. This (continues Dacier) is an artful, but severe irony.

As for the objection concerning the impossibility of the Greeks believing their wives could be in Troy; she answers, that the authors of this objection have not sufficiently considered human nature. The voice of a beloved person might of a sudden, and by surprise, draw from any person a word involuntarily, before he has time to make reflection. This undoubtedly is true, where circumstances make an imposture probable; but here is an impossibility; it is utterly impossible to believe the wives of these heroes could be in Troy. Besides, Menelaus himself tells us, that even he had fallen into the snare, but Ulysses prevented it: this adds to the incredibility of the story; for if this faculty of mimicry was given upon his marriage with Helen, it was nothing new to him; he must be supposed to be acquainted with it, and consequently be the less liable to surprise: nay it is not impossible, but the experiment might have been made upon him before Helen fled away with Paris.

In short, I think this passage wants a further vindication; the circumstances are low, if not incredible. Virgil, the great imitator of Homer, has given us a very different and more noble description of the destruction of Troy: he has not thought fit to imitate him in this description.

If we allow Helen to act by compulsion, to have feared the Trojans, and that Deiphobus was sent as a spy upon her actions; yet this

To quit the steed we both impatient press,
 Threat'ning to answer from the dark recess.
 Unmov'd the mind of Ithacus remain'd: 385
 And the vain ardours of our love restrain'd:
 But Anticlus unable to controul,
 Spoke loud the language of his yearning soul:
 Ulysses straight with indignation fir'd,
 (For so the common care of Greece requir'd) 390
 Firm to his lips his forceful hands apply'd,
 Till on his tongue the flutt'ring murmurs dy'd.
 Meantime Minerva from the fraudulent horse,
 Back to the court of Priam bent your course.

Inclement fate! Telemachus replies, 395
 Frail is the boasted attribute of wise:
 The leader, mingling with the vulgar host,
 Is in the common mass of matter lost!
 But now let sleep the painful waste repair
 Of sad reflection, and corroding care." 400

He ceas'd; the menial fair that round her wait,
 At Helen's beck prepare the room of state;
 Beneath an ample portico, they spread
 The downy fleece to form the slumb'rous bed;

is no vindication of her conduct: she still acts a mean part, and through fear becomes an accomplice in endeavouring to betray and ruin the Greeks.

I shall just add, that after the death of Paris, Helen marries Deiphobus; that the story of the wooden horse is probably founded upon the taking of Troy by an engine called a horse, as the like engine was called a ram by the Romans.

Book IV. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 165

And o'er soft palls of purple grain, unfold 405

Rich tapestry, stiff with inwoven gold :

Then through th' illumin'd dome, to balmy rest

Th' obsequious herald guides each princely guest :

While to his regal bow'r the king ascends,

And beauteous Helen on her lord attends. 410

Soon as the morn, in orient purple drest,

Unbarr'd the portal of the roseate east,

The monarch rose; magnificent to view,

Th' imperial mantle o'er his vest he threw :

The glitt'ring zone athwart his shoulder cast, 415

A starry falchion low-depending grac'd ;

Clasp'd on his feet th' embroider'd sandals shine ;

And forth he moves, majestic and divine :

Instant to young Telemachus he press'd,

And thus benevolent his speech address'd. 420

Say, royal youth, sincere of soul, report

What cause hath led you to the Spartan court?

Do public or domestic cares constrain

This toilsome voyage o'er the surgy main?

“ Oh highly-favour'd delegate of Jove ! 425

(Replies the prince) inflam'd with filial love,

And anxious hope, to hear my parent's doom,

A suppliant to your royal court I come.

Our sov'reign seat a lewd usurping race

With lawless riot, and misrule disgrace; 430

To pamper'd insolence devoted fall

Prime of the flock, and choicest of the stall :

For wild ambition wings their bold desire,
 And all to mount th' imperial bed aspire.
 But prostrate I implore, oh king! relate 435
 The mournful series of my father's fate;
 Each known disaster of the man disclose,
 Born by his mother to a world of woes!
 Recite them! nor in erring pity fear
 To wound with storied grief the filial ear: 440
 If e'er Ulysses, to reclaim your right,
 Avow'd his zeal in council or in fight,
 If Phrygian camps the friendly toils attest,
 To the sire's merit give the son's request.
 Deep from his inmost soul Atrides sigh'd, 445
 And thus indignant to the prince reply'd:
 Heav'ns! would a soft, inglorious, dastard train
 An absent hero's nuptial joys profane!

V. 447. *Heav'ns! would a soft, inglorious, dastard train.*] Menelaus is fired with indignation at the injuries offered his friend by the suitors: he breaks out into an exclamation, and in a just contempt vouchsafes not to mention them: he thinks he fully distinguishes whom he intends, by calling them *αναλκιδες αυτοι*, 'those cowards.' The comparison which he introduces is very just, they are the fawns, Ulysses is the lion.

This is the first simile that Homer has inserted in the *Odyssey*; but I cannot think it proceeded from a barrenness of invention, or through phlegm in the declension of his years, as some have imagined. The nature of the poem requires a difference of style from the *Iliad*! The *Iliad* rushes along like a torrent; the *Odyssey* flows gently on like a deep stream, with a smooth tranquillity; Achilles is all fire, Ulysses all wisdom.

So with her young, amid the woodland shades,
 A tim'rous hind the lion's court invades, 450
 Leaves in the fatal lair the tender fawns,
 Climbs the green cliff, or feeds the flow'ry lawns:
 Meantime return'd, with dire remorseless sway
 The monarch-savage rends the trembling prey.
 With equal fury, and with equal fame, 455
 Ulysses soon shall reassert his claim.
 O Jove, supreme, whom gods and men revere!
 And * thou, to whom 'tis giv'n to gild the sphere!
 With pow'r congenial join'd, propitious aid
 The chief adopted by the martial maid! 460
 Such to our wish the warrior soon restore,
 As when contending on the Lesbian shore
 His prowess Philomelides confess'd,
 And loud-acclaiming Greeks the victor bless'd:

The simile in Homer is really beautiful; but in Hobbs ridiculous.

As when a stag and hind ent'ring the den
 Of th' absent lion, lulls his whelps with tales
 Of hills and dales; the lion comes agen,
 And tears them into pieces with his nails.

4

Can any thing be more foreign to the sense of Homer, or worse translated? He construes *κηρυκας εξερεησι*, by telling stories of hills and dales to the lion's whelps, instead of Jaga investigat: but such mistakes are so frequent in Hobbs, that one would almost suspect his learning in Greek: he has disgraced the best poet, and a very great historian; Homer, and Thucydides.

V. 462. *As when contending on the Lesbian shore.*] The poet here gives an account of one of Ulysses's adventures. Philomelides was

* Apollo.

Then soon th' invaders of his bed and throne, 465
 Their love presumptuous shall with life atone.
 With patient ear, oh royal youth, attend
 The storied labours of thy father's friend:
 Fruitful of deeds, the copious tale is long,
 But truth severe shall dictate to my tongue: 470
 Learn what I heard the sea-born seer relate,
 Whose eye can pierce the dark recess of fate.

Long on th' Egyptian coast by calms confin'd,
 Heav'n to my fleet refus'd a prosp'rous wind:
 No vows had we preferr'd, nor victim slain! 475
 For this the gods each fav'ring gale restrain:
 Jealous, to see their high behests obey'd;
 Severe, if men th' eternal rites evade.
 High o'er a gulfy sea, the Pharian isle
 Fronts the deep roar of disemboguing Nile: 480

king of Lesbos, and Eustathius observes, that there was a tradition that Ulysses and Diomedes slew him, and turned a stately monument he had raised for himself into a public place for the reception of strangers.

V. 479. — [*The Pharian isle.*] This description of Pharos has given great trouble to the critics and geographers; it is generally concluded, that the distance of Pharos is about seven stadia from Alexandria; Ammianus Marcellinus mentions this very passage thus; l. xxii. 'Insula Pharos, ubi Protea cum Phocarum gregibus diversatum Homerus fabulatur inflatus, à civitatis litore mille passibus disparata,' or, 'about a mile distant from the shores.' How then comes Homer to affirm it to be distant a full day's sail? Dacier answers, that Homer might have heard that the Nile, continually bringing down much earthy substance, had enlarged the continent: and knowing it not to be so distant in his time, took the liberty of a

Her distance from the shore, the course begun
 At dawn, and ending with the setting sun,
 A galley measures; when the stiffer gales
 Rise on the poop, and fully stretch the sails.
 There, anchor'd vessels safe in harbour lie, 485
 Whilst limpid springs the failing cask supply.

poet, and described it as still more distant in the days of Menelaus. But Dacier never sees a mistake in Homer. Had his poetry been worse if he had described the real distance of Pharos? It is allowable in a poet to disguise the truth, to adorn his story; but what ornament has he given his poetry by this enlargement? Bochart has fully proved that there is no accession to the continent from any substance that the Nile brings down with it: the violent agitation of the seas prohibits it from lodging, and forming itself into solidity. Eratosthenes is of opinion, that Homer was ignorant of the mouths of Nile: but Strabo answers, that his silence about them is not an argument of his ignorance, for neither has he ever mentioned where he was born. But Strabo does not enter fully into the meaning of Eratosthenes: Eratosthenes does not mean that Homer was ignorant of the mouths of Nile from his silence, but because he places Pharos at the distance of a whole day's sail from the continent. The only way to unite this inconsistency is to suppose, that the poet intended to specify the Pelusiatic mouth of Nile, from which Pharos stands about a day's sail: but this is submitted to the critics.

I cannot tell whether one should venture to make use of the word Nile in the translation, it is doubtless an anachronism; that name being unknown in the times of Homer and Menelaus, when the Nile was called *Ægyptus*. Homer in this very book

— — — *Λυγυπτιοιο Διι ποταμῷ ποταμῷ.*

Yet on the other hand, this name of *Ægyptus* is so little known, that a common reader would scarce distinguish the river from the country; and indeed universal custom has obtained for using the Latin name instead of the Grecian, in many other instances which are equally anachronisms: witness all the names of the gods and goddesses throughout Homer; Jupiter for Zeus, Juno for Hè, Neptune for Posidaon, &c.

And now the twentieth sun descending, laves
His glowing axle in the western waves;
Still with expanded sails we court in vain
Propitious winds, to waft us o'er the main: 490
And the pale mariner at once deplores
His drooping vigour, and exhausted stores.
When lo! a bright cœrulean form appears,
The fair Eidothea! to dispel my fears;
Proteus her sire divine. With pity press'd, 495
Me sole the daughter of the deep address'd;
What time with hunger pin'd, my absent mates
Roam the wild isle in search of rural cates,
Bait the barb'd steel, and from the fishy flood
Appease th' afflictive fierce desire of food. 500

V. 499. *Bait the barb'd steel, and from the fishy flood.*] Menelaus says, hunger was so violent among his companions, that they were compelled to eat fish. Plutarch in his *Symposiacks* observes, that among the Syrians and Greeks, to abstain from fish was esteemed a piece of sanctity; that though the Greeks were encamped upon the Hellespont, there is not the least intimation that they eat fish, or any sea provision; and that the companions of Ulysses, in the twelfth book of the *Odyssey*, never sought for fish till all their other provisions were consumed, and that the same necessity compelled them to eat the herds of the Sun which induced them to taste fish. No fish is ever offered in sacrifice: the Pythagoreans in particular command fish not to be eaten more strictly than any other animal: fish afford no excuse at all for their destruction, they live as it were in another world, disturb not our air, consume not our fruits, or injure the waters; and therefore the Pythagoreans, who were unwilling to offer violence to any animals, fed very little, or not at all, on fishes. I thought it necessary to insert this from Plutarch, because it is an observation that explains other passages in the sequel of the *Odyssey*.

Whoc'er thou art (the azure goddess cries)
Thy conduct ill deserves the praise of wise:
Is death thy choice, or misery thy boast,
That here inglorious on a barren coast
Thy brave associates droop, a meagre train 505
With famine pale, and ask thy care in vain?

Struck with the kind reproach, I straight reply;
Whate'er thy title in thy native sky,
A goddess sure! for more than mortal grace
Spcak's thee descendant of ethereal race: 510
Deem not, that here of choice my fleet remains;
Some heav'nly pow'r avcrse my stay constrains:
O, piteous of my fate, vouchsafe to shew,
(For what's sequester'd from celestial view?)
What pow'r becalms th' innavigable seas? 515
What guilt provokes him, and what vows appease?

I ceas'd, when affable the goddess cry'd;
Observe, and in the truths I speak confide:
Th' orac'lous seer frequents the Pharian coast,
From whose high bed my birth divine I boast: 520
Proteus, a name tremendous o'er the main,
The delegate of Neptune's wat'ry reign.

V. 521. *Proteus, a name tremendous o'er the main.*] Eustathius enumerates various opinions concerning Proteus; some understand Proteus allegorically to signify the first matter which undergoes all changes; others make him an emblem of true friendship, which ought not to be settled till it has been tried in all shapes: others make Proteus a picture of a flatterer, who takes up all shapes, and suits himself to all forms, in compliance to the temper of the person

Watch with insidious care his known abode;
 There fast in chains constrain the various god:
 Who bound, obedient to superior force, 525
 Unerring will prescribe your destin'd course.
 If studious of your realms, you then demand
 Their state, since last you left your natal land;

whom he courts. * The Greeks (observes Diodorus) imagined all these metamorphoses of Proteus to have been borrowed from the practices of the Egyptian kings, who were accustomed to wear the figures of lions, bulls, or dragons, in their diadems, as emblems of royalty, and sometimes that of trees, &c. not so much for ornament as terror. Others took Proteus to be an enchanter; and Eustathius recounts several that were eminent in this art, as Cratisthenes the Phliasian (which Dacier renders by mistake Calisthenes the Physician) who when he pleased could appear all on fire, and assume other appearances to the astonishment of the spectators: such also was Xenophon, Scymnus of Tarentum, Philippides of Syracuse, Heraclitus of Mitylene, and Nymphodorus, all practisers of magical arts; and Eustathius recites that the Phocæ were made use of in their incantations. Some write that Proteus was an Egyptian tumbler, who could throw himself into variety of figures and postures; others, a stage player; others, that he was a great general, skilled in all the arts and stratagems of war: Dacier looks upon him to have been an enchanter, or *Σαυματοποιός*. It is certain from Herodotus, that there was in the times of Menelaus, a king named Proteus, who reigned in Memphis; that Egypt was always remarkable for those who excelled in magical arts; thus Jannes and Jambres changed, at least in appearance, a rod into a serpent, and water into blood: it is not therefore improbable but that Menelaus, hearing of him while he was in Egypt, went to consult him as an enchanter, which kind of men always pretended to foreknow events: this perhaps was the real foundation of the whole story concerning Proteus; the rest is the fiction and embellishment of the poet, who ascribes to his Proteus whatever the credulity of men usually ascribes to enchanters.

Instant the god obsequious will disclose
Bright tracks of glory, or a cloud of woes. 530

She ceas'd, and suppliant thus I made reply;
O goddess! on thy aid my hopes rely:
Dictate propitious to my duteous ear,
What arts can captivate the changeful seer?
For perilous th' assay, unheard the toil, 535
T' elude the prescience of a god by guile.

Thus to the goddess mild my suit I end.
Then she. Obedient to my rule, attend:
When through the zone of heav'n the mounted sun
Hath journey'd half, and half remains to run; 540
The seer, while zephyrs curl the swelling deep,
Basks on the breezy shore, in grateful sleep,
His oozy limbs. Emerging from the wave,
The Phocæ swift surround his rocky cave,
Frequent and full; the consecrated train 545
Of * her, whose azure trident awes the main:
There wallowing warm, th' enormous herd exhales
An oily steam, and taints the noon-tide gales.
To that recess, commodious for surprise,
When purple light shall next suffuse the skies, 550
With me repair; and from thy warrior band
Three chosen chiefs of dauntless soul command:
Let their auxiliar force befriend the toil,
For strong the god, and perfected in guile.

Stretch'd on the shelly shore, he first surveys 555
 The flouncing herd ascending from the seas ;
 Their number summ'd, repos'd in sleep profound
 The scaly charge their guardian god surround :
 So with his batt'ning flocks the careful swain
 Abides, pavilion'd on the grassy plain. 560
 With pow'rs united, obstinately bold
 Invade him, couch'd amid the scaly fold :
 Instant he wears, elusive of the rape,
 The mimic force of ev'ry savage shape :
 Or glides with liquid lapse a murm'ring stream, 565
 Or wrapt in flame, he glows at ev'ry limb.
 Yet still retentive, with redoubled might
 Through each vain passive form constrain his flight.
 But when, his native shape resum'd, he stands
 Patient of conquest, and your cause demands ; 570
 The cause that urg'd the bold attempt declare,
 And soothe the vanquish'd with a victor's pray'r.
 The bands relax'd, implore the seer to say
 What godhead interdicts the wat'ry way ?
 Who straight propitious, in prophetic strain .575
 Will teach you to repass th' unmeasur'd main.
 She ceas'd, and bounding from the shelfy shore,
 Round the descending nymph the waves redounding roar

V. 569. *But when, his native shape resum'd, &c.*] This is founded upon the practice of enchanters, who never give their answers, till they have astonished the imagination of those who consult them with their juggling delusions. Dacier.

High wrapt in wonder of the future deed,
 With joy impetuous, to the port I speed : 580
 The wants of nature with repast suffice,
 Till night with grateful shade involv'd the skies,
 And shed ambrosial dews. Fast by the deep,
 Along the tented shore, in balmy sleep,
 Our cares were lost. When o'er the eastern lawn, 585
 In saffron robes the daughter of the dawn
 Advanc'd her rosy steps; before the bay,
 Due ritual honours to the gods I pay;
 Then seek the place the sea-born nymph assign'd,
 With three associates of undaunted mind. 590
 Arriv'd, to form along th' appointed strand
 For each a bed, she scoops the hilly sand:
 Then from her azure car, the finny spoils
 Of four vast Phocæ takes, to veil her wiles:
 Beneath the finny spoils extended prone, 595
 Hard toil! the prophet's piercing eye to shun;
 New from the corse, the scaly frauds diffuse
 Unsavoury stench of oil, and brackish ooze:
 But the bright sea-maid's gentle pow'r implor'd,
 With nectar'd drops the sick'ning sense restor'd. 600
 Thus till the sun had travell'd half the skies,
 Ambush'd we lie, and wait the bold emprise:
 When thronging quick to bask in open air,
 The flocks of Ocean to the strand repair:
 Couch'd on the sunny sand, the monsters sleep: 605
 Then Proteus mounting from the hoary deep.

Surveys his charge, unknowing of deccit:
 (In order told, we make the sum complete.)
 Pleas'd with the false review, secure he lies,
 And leaden slumbers press his drooping eyes. 610
 Rushing impetuous forth, we straight prepare
 A furious onset with the sound of war,
 And shouting seize the god: our force t' evade
 His various arts he soon resumes in aid:
 A lion now, he curls a surgy mane; 615
 Sudden, our bands a spotted pard restrain;
 Then arm'd with tusks, and lightning in his eyes,
 A boar's obscener shape the god belies:
 On spiry volumes, there, a dragon rides;
 Here, from our strict embrace a stream he glides: 620
 And last, sublime his stately growth he rears,
 A tree, and well-dissembled foliage wears.

V. 613. *And shouting seize the god.* —] Proteus has, through the whole story, been described as a god who knew all things; it may then be asked, how comes it that he did not foreknow the violence that was designed against his own person? and is it not a contradiction, that he who knew Menelaus without information, should not know that he lay in ambush to seize him? The only answer that occurs to me is, that these enchanters never pretend to have an inherent foreknowldge of events, but learn things by magical arts, and by recourse to the secrets of their profession; so that Proteus having no suspicion, had not consulted his art, and consequently might be surprised by Menelaus: so far is agreeable to the pretensions of such deluders: the poet indeed has drawn him in colours stronger than life; but poetry adds or detracts at pleasure, and is allowed frequently to step out of the way, to bring a foreign ornament into the story.

Vain efforts! with superior pow'r compress'd,
 Me with reluctance thus the seer address'd.
 Say, son of Atreus, say what god inspir'd 625
 This daring fraud, and what the boon desir'd?

I thus; O thou, whose certain eye foresees
 The fix'd event of fate's remote decrees;
 After long woes, and various toil endur'd,
 Still on this desert isle my fleet is moor'd; 630
 Unfriended of the gales. All-knowing! say,
 What godhead interdicts the wat'ry way?
 What vows repentant will the pow'r appease,
 To speed a prosp'rous voyage o'er the seas?

To Jove (with stern regard the god replies) 635
 And all th' offended synod of the skics,

V. 635. *To Jove ——— Just hecatombs ——— &c.*] Homer continually inculcates morality, and piety to the gods; he gives in this place a great instance of the necessity of it. Menelaus cannot succeed in any of his actions, till he pays due honours to the gods; the neglect of sacrifice is the occasion of all his calamity, and the performance of it opens a way to all his future prosperity.

V. 643. — — — *Nile, who from the secret source
 Of Jove's high seat descends ———*]

Homer, it must be confessed, gives the epithet *Διμετης* generally to all rivers; if he has used it here peculiarly, there might have been room to have imagined that he had been acquainted with the true cause of the inundations of this famous river: the word *Διμετης* implies it: for it is now generally agreed, that these prodigious inundations proceed from the vast rains and the melting of the snows on the mountains of the Moon in Ethiopia, about the autumnal equinox: when those rains begin to fall, the river by degrees increases, and as

Just hecatombs with due devotion slain,
 Thy guilt absolv'd, a prosp'rous voyage gain.
 To the firm sanction of thy fate attend!
 An exile thou, nor cheering face of friend, 640
 Nor sight of natal shore, nor regal dome
 Shalt yet enjoy, but still art doom'd to roam.
 Once more the Nile, who from the secret source
 Of Jove's high seat descends with sweepy force,
 Must view his billows white beneath thy oar, 646
 And altars blaze along his sanguine shore.
 Then will the gods, with holy pomp ador'd,
 To thy long vows a safe return accord.

He ceas'd: heart-wounded with afflictive pain,
 (Doom'd to repeat the perils of the main, 650
 A shelfy tract, and long!) O scer, I cry,
 To the stern sanction of th' offended sky
 My prompt obedience bows. But deign to say,
 What fate propitious, or what dire dismay
 Sustain those peers, the relics of our host, 655
 Whom I with Nestor on the Phrygian coast
 Embracing left? Must I the warriors weep,
 Whelm'd in the bottom of the monstrous deep?
 Or did the kind domestic friend deplore
 The breathless heroes on their native shore? 660

they abate, it decreases; the word *Διμετής* is therefore peculiarly proper when applied to the Nile; for though all rivers depend upon the waters that fall from the air, or *ἐκ Διός*, yet the Nile more especially; for when the rain ceases, the Nile consists only of seven empty channels.

Press not too far, reply'd the god; but cease
To know, what known will violate thy peace:
Too curious of their doom! with friendly woe
Thy breast will heave, and tears eternal flow.
Part live! the rest, a lamentable train! 665
Range the dark bounds of Pluto's dreary reign.
Two, foremost in the roll of Mars renown'd,
Whose arms with conquest in thy cause were crown'd,
Fell by disastrous fate; by tempests tost,
A third lives wretched on a distant coast. 670

By Neptune rescu'd from Minerva's hate,
On Gyræ, safe Oïlean Ajax sat,
His ship o'erwhelm'd; but frowning on the floods,
Impious he roar'd defiance to the gods;
To his own prowess all the glory gave, 675
The pow'r defrauding who vouchsaf'd to save.
This heard the raging ruler of the main;
His spear, indignant for such high disdain,
He lanch'd; dividing with his forky mace
Th' aerial summit from the marble base: 680
The rock rush'd sea-ward with impetuous roar
Ingulf'd, and to th' abyss the boaster bore.

V. 682. — — *and to th' abyss the boaster bore.*] It is in the original, 'He died, having drunk the salt water.' This verse has been

By Juno's guardian aid, the wat'ry vast
 Secure of storms, your royal brother past:
 Till coasting nigh the cape, where Malea shrouds
 Her spiry cliffs amid surrounding clouds; 686
 A whirling gust tumultuous from the shore,
 Across the deep his lab'ring vessel bore.
 In an ill-fated hour the coast he gain'd,
 Where late in regal pomp Thyestes reign'd; 690
 But when his hoary honours bow'd to fate,
 Ægysthus govern'd in paternal state.
 The surges now subside, the tempest ends;
 From his tall ship the king of men descends:
 There fondly thinks the gods conclude his toil! 695
 Far from his own domain salutes the soil:
 With rapture oft' the verge of Greece reviews,
 And the dear turf with tears of joy bedews.
 Him thus exulting on the distant strand,
 A spy distinguish'd from his airy stand; 700
 To bribe whose vigilance, Ægysthus told
 A mighty sum of ill persuading gold:

water: but why may not Proteus be supposed to be serious, and the term *Ἀλμυρον ὑδωρ*, to imply no more than that he was drowned in the waves of the ocean? I know only one reason that can give any colour to the objection, viz. its being possibly become a vulgar expression, and used commonly in a ludicrous sense; then indeed it is to be avoided in poetry, but it does not follow, because perhaps it might be used in this manner in the days of these critics, that therefore it was so used in the days of Homer. What was poetical in the time of the poet, might be grown vulgar in the time of the critics.

There watch'd this guardian of his guilty fear,
 Till the twelfth moon had wheel'd her pale career;
 And now admonish'd by his eye, to court 705
 With terror wing'd conveys the dread report.
 Of deathful arts expert, his lord employs
 The ministers of blood in dark surprise:
 And twenty youths in radiant mail incas'd,
 Close ambush'd nigh the spacious hall he plac'd. 710
 Then bids prepare the hospitable treat:
 Vain shews of love to veil his felon-hate!
 To grace the victor's welcome from the wars,
 A train of coursers, and triumphal cars
 Magnificent he leads: the royal guest 715
 Thoughtless of ill, accepts the fraudulent feast.
 The troop forth issuing from the dark recess,
 With homicidal rage the king oppress!
 So, whilst he feeds luxurious in the stall,
 The sov'reign of the herd is doom'd to fall. 720
 The partners of his fame and toils at Troy,
 Around their lord, a mighty ruin! lie:
 Mix'd with the brave, the base invaders bleed;
 Ægysthus sole survives to boast the deed.

V. 719. *So, whilst he feeds luxurious in the stall, &c.*] Dacier translates βov, by taureau, a bull; and misunderstands Eustathius, who directly says, that in the second Iliad the poet compares Agamemnon to a bull, in this place to an ox, ταυρω εικασεν νυν δε βοι αυτον ωμοιωσεν. The one was undoubtedly designed to describe the courage and majestic port of a warrior, the other to give us an image of a prince falling in full peace and plenty, ως βον επι πατηγη.

He said; chill horrors shook my shiv'ring soul,
Rack'd with convulsive pangs in dust I roll; 726
And hate, in madness of extreme despair,
To view the sun, or breathe the vital air.
But when superior to the rage of woe,
I stood restor'd, and tears had ceas'd to flow; 730
Lenient of grief, the pitying god began —
Forget the brother, and resume the man:
To fate's supreme dispose the dead resign,
That care be fate's, a speedy passage thine.
Still lives the wretch who wrought the death deplor'd,
But lives a victim for thy vengeful sword; 736
Unless with filial rage Orestes glow,
And swift prevent the meditated blow:
You timely will return a welcome guest,
With him to share the sad funereal feast. 740

He said: new thoughts my beating heart employ,
My gloomy soul receives a gleam of joy.
Fair hope revives; and eager I address
The prescient godhead to reveal the rest.
The doom decreed of those disastrous two 745
I've heard with pain, but oh! the tale pursue;
What third brave son of Mars the fates constrain
To roam the howling desart of the main:
Or in eternal shade if cold he lies,
Provoke new sorrow from these grateful eyes. 750

V. 749. *Or in eternal shade if cold he lies.*] Proteus in the beginning of his relation had said, that 'one person was alive, and re-

That chief (rejoin'd the god) his race derives
From Ithaca, and wond'rous woes survives;

mained enclosed by the ocean: how then comes Menelaus here to say, Give me an account of that other person who is alive, or dead? Perhaps the sorrow which Menelaus conceived for his friend Ulysses, might make him fear the worst; and Proteus adding, 'enclosed by the ocean,' might give a suspicion that he was dead, the words being capable of ambiguity. However this be, it sets the friendship of Menelaus in a strong light: where friendship is sincere, a state of uncertainty is a state of fears, we dread even possibilities, and give them an imaginary certainty. Upon this, one of the finest compliments that a poet ever made to a patron turns, that of Horace to Mæcenas, in the first of the Epodes.

It may not perhaps be disagreeable to the reader to observe, that Virgil has borrowed this story of Proteus from Homer, and translated it almost literally. Rapin says, that Homer's description is more ingenious and fuller of invention, but Virgil's more judicious. I wish that critic had given his reasons for his opinion. I believe in general, the plan of the Iliad and Odyssey is allowed by the best of critics to be more perfect than that of the Æneis. Homer, with respect to the unity of time, has the advantage very manifestly: Rapin confesses it, and Aristotle proposes him as an example to all epic authors. Where then is the superiority of judgment? Is it that there are more fabulous, I mean incredible, stories in Homer than Virgil? as that of the Cyclops, the ships of Alcinous, &c. Virgil has imitated most of these bold fables, and the story of the ships of Alcinous is not more incredible than the transformation of the ships of Æneas. But this is too large a subject to be discussed in the compass of these annotations. In particular passages I freely allow the preference to Virgil, as in the descent of Æneas into hell, &c. but in this story of Proteus, I cannot see any superiority of judgment. Virgil is little more than a translator; to shew the particulars would be too tedious: I refer it to the reader to compare the two authors, and shall only instance in one passage.

Ἡμεῖς δ' αὖτ' εἰσὶν ἄλλοις ἐπισσυνεῖν, ἀμφὶ δὲ χεῖρας
βαλλόμεν· ἂν δ' ὁ γέρον δολιγὴς ἐπεληθῇτο τέχνης,

Laertes' son: girt with circumfluous tides,
 He still calamitous constraint abides.
 Him in Calypso's cave of late I view'd, 755
 When streaming grief his faded cheek bedew'd.
 But vain his pray'r, his arts are vain to move
 Th' enamour'd goddess, or elude her love :
 His vessel sunk, and dear companions lost,
 He lives reluctant on a foreign coast. 760
 But oh belov'd by heav'n! reserv'd to thee
 A happier lot the smiling fates decree:
 Free from that law, beneath whose mortal sway
 Matter is chang'd, and varying forms decay;
 Elysium shall be thine; the blissful plains 765
 Of utmost earth, where Rhadamanthus reigns.

Αλλ' ἦτοι πρωτιστὰ λεων γενετ' ἡυγενεῖς,
 Αὐτὰρ ἐπεῖτα δρακῶν, καὶ παρδαλῖς, ἥδ' ἄγερας σὺς,
 Γινέτο δ' ὕγρον ὕδωρ, καὶ δένδρεον ὑψιπέτηλον, &c.

' Cum clamore ruit magno, manicisque jacentem
 Occupat: ille suæ contra non immemor artis,
 Omnia transformat sese in miracula rerum,
 Ignemque, horribilemque feram, fluviumque liquentem, &c.'

Homer has a manifest advantage in the occasion of the story: the loss of a few bees seems to be a cause too trivial for an undertaking so great as the surprise of a deity: whereas the whole happiness of Menelaus depends upon this consultation of Proteus: this is a far more important cause, and consequently in this respect something more is due to Homer than the sole honour of an inventor.

V. 765. *Elysium shall be thine; the blissful plains
 Of utmost earth, &c.*]

This is the only place in which the Elysian field is mentioned in

Joys ever young, unmix'd with pain or fear,
 Fill the wide circle of th' eternal year :
 Stern winter smiles on that auspicious clime :
 The fields are florid with unfading prime : 770
 From the bleak pole no winds inclement blow,
 Mould the round hail, or flake the fleecy snow ;
 But from the breezy deep the blest inhale
 The fragrant murmurs of the western gale.
 This grace peculiar will the gods afford 775
 To thee the son of Jove, and beautiful Helen's lord.

He ceas'd, and plunging in the vast profound,
 Beneath the god the whirling billows bound.
 Then speeding back, involv'd in various thought,
 My friends attending at the shore I sought. 780
 Arriv'd, the rage of hunger we control,
 Till night with silent shade invests the pole ;

Homer. The conjectures of the ancients are very various about it: Plato in his *Phæd.* places it in *cœlo stellato*, or the region of the stars; but since Homer fixes it *εις περιπαλα γαιης*, or (as Milton expresses it) at the 'earth's green end,' I will pass over the conjectures of others, especially since the *μαχαρων Νησοι*, by which others express Elysium, confine it to this world.

Strabo, says Eustathius, places it not far from Maurusia, that lies near the Straits: it is supposed by Bochart, as Dacier observes, that the fable is of Phœnician extraction, that Alizuth in Hebrew signifies joy or exultation, which word the Greeks, adapting to their way of pronounciation, called Elysium. If this be true, I should come into an opinion that has much prevailed, that the Greeks had heard of Paradise from the Hebrews; and that the Hebrews describing Paradise as a place of Alizuth, or joy, gave occasion to all the fables of the Grecian Elysium.

Then lose the cares of life in pleasing rest.—
 Soon as the morn reveals the roseate east,
 With sails we wing the masts, our anchors weigh,
 Unmoor the fleet, and rush into the sea. 786
 Rang'd on the banks, beneath our equal oars
 White curl the waves, and the vex'd ocean roars.
 Then steering backward from the Pharian isle,
 We gain the stream of Jove-descended Nile: 790
 There quit the ships, and on the destin'd shore
 With ritual hecatombs the gods adore:
 Their wrath aton'd, to Agamemnon's name
 A cenotaph I raise of deathless fame.
 These rites to piety and grief discharg'd, 795
 The friendly gods a springing gale enlarg'd:
 The fleet swift tilting o'er the surges flew,
 Till Grecian cliffs appear'd, a blissful view!
 Thy patient ear hath heard me long relate
 A story, fruitful of disastrous fate: 800
 And now, young prince, indulge my fond request;
 Be Sparta honour'd with his royal guest,
 Till from his eastern goal, the joyous sun
 His twelfth diurnal race begins to run.
 Meantime my train the friendly gifts prepare, 805
 Three sprightly coursers, and a polish'd car:

V. 806. *Three sprightly coursers.*] How comes it to pass that Me-
 nelaus proffers three horses to Telemachus? This was a complete set
 among the ancients, they used one pole-horse and two leaders. EU-
 STATIUS.

With these, a goblet of capacious mould,
 Figur'd with art to dignify the gold,
 (Form'd for libation to the gods) shall prove
 A pledge and monument of sacred love. 810

My quick return, young Ithacus rejoin'd,
 Damps the warm wishes of my raptur'd mind:
 Did not my fate my needful haste constrain,
 Charm'd by your speech, so graceful and humane,
 Lost in delight the circling year would roll, 815
 While deep attention fix'd my list'ning soul.
 But now to Pyle permit my destin'd way,
 My lov'd associates chide my long delay:
 In dear remembrance of your royal grace,
 I take the present of the promis'd vase; 820
 The coursers for the champaign sports, retain;
 That gift our barren rocks will render vain:

V. 822. *That gift our barren rocks will render vain.*] This passage where Telemachus refuses the horses has been much observed, and turned to a moral sense, viz. as a lesson to men to desire nothing but what is suitable to their conditions. Horace has introduced it into his *Epistles*:

'Haud malè Telemachus, proles patientis Ulyssci;
 Non est aptus equis Ithacæ locus, ut neque planis
 Porrectus spaciis, nec multæ prodigus herbæ:
 Atride, magis apta tibi tua dona relinquam.'

This is the reason why Ulysses (as Eustathius observes upon the tenth of the *Iliad*) leaves the horses of Rhesus to the disposal of Diomedes; so that the same spirit of wisdom reigned in Telemachus, that was so remarkable in Ulysses. This is the reason why Menelaus smiled;

Horrid with cliffs, our meagre land allows
 Thin herbage for the mountain goat to browse,
 But neither mead nor plain supplies, to feed 825
 The sprightly courser, or indulge his speed:
 To sea-surrounded realms the gods assign
 Small tract of fertile lawn, the least to mine.

His hand the king with tender passion press'd,
 And smiling, thus the royal youth address'd: 830

it was not at the frankness or simplicity of Telemachus, but it was a smile of joy, to see the young prince inherit his father's wisdom.

It is the remark of Eustathius, that Telemachus is far from exalting the nature of his country; he confesses it to be barren, and more barren than the neighbouring islands; yet that natural and laudable affection which all worthy persons have for their country, makes him prefer it to places of a more happy situation. This appears to me a replication to what Menelaus had before offered concerning the transplantation of Ulysses to Sparta; this is contained in *πποτοτοτο*; and then the meaning is, It is true Ithaca is a barren region, yet more desirable than this country of Lacedæmon, this *πποτοτοτο γαια*. It is the more probable from the offer of horses which Menelaus had then made, and is also another reason for the smile of Menelaus.

Eustathius remarks that Menelaus, though he has expressed the greatest friendship for Ulysses, yet makes no offer to restore the fortunes of his friend by any military assistance; though he had a most fair opportunity given him to repay the past kindness of Ulysses to his wife Penelope and his son Telemachus; and how comes Telemachus not to ask it either of Nestor or Menelaus? He answers, that this depended upon the uncertainty they were yet under, concerning the life of Ulysses. But the true reason in my opinion is, that the nature of epic poetry requires a contrary conduct: the hero of the poem is to be the chief agent, and the re-establishment of his fortunes must be owing to his own wisdom and valour. I have enlarged upon this already, so that there is no occasion in this place to insist upon it.

O early worth! a soul so wise, and young,
Proclaims you from the sage Ulysses sprung.
Selected from my stores, of matchless price
An urn shall recompense your prudent choice:
Not mean the massy mould of silver, grac'd 835
By Vulcan's art, the verge with gold enchas'd;
A pledge the scepter'd pow'r of Sidon gave,
When to his realm I plough'd the orient wave.

Thus they alternate; while with artful care
The menial train the regal feast prepare: 840
The firstlings of the flock are doom'd to die;
Rich fragrant wines the chchering bowl supply;
A female band the gift of Ceres bring;
And the gilt roofs with genial triumph ring.

Meanwhile, in Ithaca, the suitor-pow'rs 845
In active games divide their jovial hours:
In Areas vary'd with mosaic art,
Some whirl the disk, and some the jav'lin dart.
Aside, sequester'd from the vast resort,
Antinous sat spectator of the sport; 850
With great Eurymachus, of worth confest,
And high descent, superior to the rest;
Whom young Noëmon lowly thus address.

My ship equipp'd within the neighb'ring port,
The prince, departing for the Pylian court, 855
Requested for his speed; but courteous, say
When steers he home, or why this long delay?

For Elis I should sail with utmost speed,
T' import twelve mares which there luxurious feed,
And twelve young mules, a strong laborious race,
New to the plough, unpractis'd in the trace. 861

Unknowing of the course to Pyle design'd,
A sudden horror seiz'd on either mind:
The prince in rural bow'r they fondly thought,
Numb'ring his flocks and herds, not far remote. 865
Relate, Antinous cries, devoid of guile,
When spread the prince his sail for distant Pyle?
Did chosen chiefs across the gulfy main
Attend his voyage, or domestic train?
Spontaneous did you speed his secret course, 870
Or was the vessel seiz'd by fraud or force?

With willing duty, not reluctant mind,
(Noëmon cry'd) the vessel was resign'd.
Who in the balance, with the great affairs
Of courts presume to weigh their private cares? 875
With him, the peerage next in pow'r to you:
And Mentor, captain of the lordly crew,
Or some celestial in his rev'rend form,
Safe from the secret rock and adverse storm,
Pilots the course: for when the glimm'ring ray 880
Of yester dawn disclos'd the tender day,
Mentor himself I saw, and much admir'd.—
Then ceas'd the youth, and from the court retir'd.

Confounded and appall'd, th' unfinish'd game
The suitors quit, and all to council came: 885

Antinous first th' assembled peers addrest,
Rage sparkling in his eyes, and burning in his breast.

O shame to manhood! shall one daring boy
The scheme of all our happiness destroy?
Fly unperceiv'd, seducing half the flow'r 890
Of nobles, and invite a foreign pow'r?
The pond'rous engine rais'd to crush us all,
Recoiling, on his head is sure to fall.
Instant prepare me, on the neighb'ring strand,
With twenty chosen mates a vessel mann'd; 895
For ambush'd close beneath the Samian shore
His ship returning shall my spies explore:
He soon his rashness shall with life atone,
Seek for his father's fate, but find his own.

V. 896. *For ambush'd close, &c.*] We have here another use which the poet makes of the voyage of Telemachus. Eustathius remarks that these incidents not only diversify but enliven the poem. But it may be asked why the poet makes not use of so fair an opportunity to insert a gallant action of Telemachus, and draw him not as eluding, but defeating his adversaries? The answer is easy; That the suitors sailed completely armed, and Telemachus unprovided of any weapons: and therefore Homer consults credibility, and forbears to paint his young hero in the colours of a knight in romance, who upon all disadvantages engages and defeats his opposers. But then to what purpose is this ambush of the suitors, and what part of the design of the poem is carried on by it? The very chief aim of it; To shew the sufferings of Ulysses: he is unfortunate in all relations of life, as a king, as an husband, and here very eminently as a father; these sufferings are laid down in the proposition of the Odyssey as essential to the poem, and consequently this ambush laid by the suitors against the life of Telemachus is an essential ornament.

With vast applause the sentence all approve;
 Then rise, and to the feastful hall remove: 901
 Swift to the queen the herald Medon ran,
 Who heard the consult of the dire divan:
 Before her dome the royal matron stands,
 And thus the message of his haste demands. 905
 What will the suitors? must my servant train
 Th' allotted labours of the day refrain,

V. 906. *The speech of Penelope.*] Longinus in particular commends this speech as a true picture of a person that feels various emotions of soul, and is borne by every gust of passion from sentiment to sentiment, with sudden and unexpected transitions. There is some obscurity in the Greek; this arises from the warmth with which she speaks, she has not leisure to explain herself fully, a circumstance natural to a person in anger.

Penelope gives a very beautiful picture of Ulysses: 'The best of princes are allowed to have their favourites, and give a greater share of affection than ordinary to particular persons. But Ulysses was a father to all his people alike, and loved them all as his children; a father, though he bears a more tender affection to one child than to another, yet shews them all an equal treatment; thus also a good king is not swayed by inclination, but justice, towards all his subjects.' DACIER.

One circumstance is very remarkable, and gives us a full view of a person in anger: at the very sight of Medon, Penelope flies out into passion; she gives him not time to speak one syllable, but speaks herself as if all the suitors were present, and reproaches them in the person of Medon, though Medon is just to her and Ulysses; but anger is an undistinguishing passion. What she says of ingratitude, recalls to my memory what is to be found in Laertius: Aristotle being asked what thing upon earth soonest grew old? replied, 'an obligation.' *Τὸ ταχίστα γηραίνει*; respondit, *χάρις*.

For them to form some exquisite repast?
 Heav'n grant this festival may prove their last!
 Or if they still must live, from me remove 910
 The double plague of luxury and love!
 Forbear, ye sons of insolence! forbear,
 In riot to consume a wretched heir.
 In the young soul illustrious thought to raise,
 Were ye not tutor'd with Ulysses' praise? 915
 Have not your fathers oft' my lord defin'd,
 Gentle of speech, beneficent of mind?
 Some kings with arbitrary rage devour,
 Or in their tyrant-minions vest the pow'r:
 Ulysses let no partial favours fall, 920
 The people's parent, he protected all:
 But absent now, perfidious and ingrate!
 His stores ye ravage, and usurp his state.

He thus; O were the woes you speak the worst!
 They form a deed more odious and accurst; 925
 More dreadful than your bod'ing soul divines:
 But pitying Jove avert the dire designs!
 The darling object of your royal care
 Is mark'd to perish in a deathful snare;
 Before he anchors in his native port, 930
 From Pyle resailing and the Spartan court;
 Horrid to speak! in ambush is decreed
 The hope and heir of Ithaca to bleed!

Sudden she sunk beneath the weighty woes,
 The vital streams a chilling horror froze: 935

The big round tear stands trembling in her eye,
 And on her tongue imperfect accents die.
 At length, in tender language, interwove
 With sighs, she thus express'd her anxious love.
 Why rashly would my son his fate explore, 940
 Ride the wild waves, and quit the safer shore?
 Did he with all the greatly wretched, crave
 A blank oblivion, and untimely grave!

'Tis not, reply'd the sage, to Medon giv'n
 To know, if some inhabitant of heav'n, 945
 In his young breast the daring thought inspir'd;
 Or if alone, with filial duty fir'd,
 The winds and waves he tempts in early bloom,
 Studious to learn his absent father's doom.

The sage retir'd: unable to controul 950
 The mighty griefs that swell her lab'ring soul,
 Rolling convulsive on the floor, is seen
 The piteous object of a prostrate queen.
 Words to her dumb complaint a pause supplies,
 And breath, to waste in unavailing cries. 955

V. 941. *Ride the wild waves* —] Were this passage to be rendered literally, it would run thus, 'climb the swift ships, which are horses to men on the seas.' Eustathius observes the allusion is very just, and that the only doubt is, whether it be brought in opportunely by Penelope? It may be doubted, if the mind could find leisure to introduce such allusions? Dacier answers that Penelope speaks thus through indignation: the grief that she conceives at the hardness of men, in finding out a way to pass the seas as well as land, furnished her with these figures very naturally; for figures are agreeable to passion.

Book IV. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 195

Around their sov'reign wept the menial fair,
To whom she thus address'd her deep despair.

Behold a wretch whom all the gods consign
To woe! Did ever sorrows equal mine?

Long to my joys my dearest lord is lost, 960

His country's buckler, and the Grecian boast:
Now from my fond embrace, by tempests torn,
Our other column of the state is borne:

Nor took a kind adieu, nor sought consent!—
Unkind confed'rates in his dire intent! 965

Ill suits it with your shews of duteous zeal,
From me the purpos'd voyage to conceal:
Though at the solemn midnight hour he rose,
Why did you fear to trouble my repose?

He either had obey'd my fond desire, 970
Or seen his mother pierc'd with grief expire.

Bid Dolius quick attend, the faithful slave
Whom to my nuptial train Icarius gave,
T' attend the fruit-groves: with incessant speed

He shall this violence of death decreed, 975
To good Laertes tell. Experienc'd age

May timely intercept the ruffian-rage,
Convene the tribes, the murd'rous plot reveal,
And to their pow'r to save his race appeal.

Then Euryclea thus. My dearest dread! 980

Though to the sword I bow this hoary head,
Or if a dungeon be the pain decreed,
I own me conscious of th' unpleasing deed:

Auxiliar to his flight, my aid implor'd,
 With wine and viands I the vessel stor'd: 985
 A solemn oath, impos'd, the secret seal'd,
 'Till the twelfth dawn the light of heav'n reveal'd.
 Dreading th' effect of a fond mother's fear,
 He dar'd not violate your royal ear.
 But bathe, and in imperial robes array'd, 990
 Pay due devotions to the * martial maid,
 And rest affianc'd in her guardian aid.
 Send not to good Laertes, nor engage
 In toils of state the miseries of age:
 'Tis impious to surmise, the pow'rs divine 995
 To ruin doom the Jove-descended line:
 Long shall the race of just Arcesius reign,
 And isles remote enlarge his old domain.

* Minerva.

V. 998. *And isles remote enlarge his old domain.*] Dacier offers a criticism upon these last words of Euryclea: it cannot be imagined these fertile fields can be spoken of Ithaca; Plutarch's description of it is entirely contradictory to this: 'Ithaca,' says he, 'is rough and mountainous, fit only to breed goats; upon cultivation it scarce yields any fruits, and these so worthless, as scarce to recompense the labour of gathering.' Homer therefore by this expression intended the other dominions of Ulysses, such as Cephallenia, &c.

But I question not, that the whole dominions of Ulysses are included, Ithaca as well as Cephallenia; for though Ithaca was mountainous, yet the vallies were fruitful, according to the description of it in the thirteenth of the Odyssey.

The rugged soil allows no level space
 For flying chariots, or the rapid race;

The queen her speech with calm attention hears,
 Her eyes restrain the silver-streaming tears: 1000
 She bathes, and rob'd, the sacred dome ascends;
 Her pious speed a female train attends:
 The salted cakes in canisters are laid,
 And thus the queen invokes Minerva's aid.

Daughter divine of Jove, whose arm can wield
 Th' avenging bolt, and shake the dreadful shield! 1006
 If e'er Ulysses to thy fane preferr'd
 The best and choicest of his flock and herd;
 Hear, goddess, hear, by those oblations won;
 And for the pious sire preserve the son: 1010
 His wish'd return with happy pow'r befriend,
 And on the suitors let thy wrath descend.

She ceas'd; shrill ecstasies of joy declare
 The fav'ring goddess present to the pray'r:
 The suitors heard, and deem'd the mirthful voice
 A signal of her Hymenæal choice: 1016

Yet not ungrateful to the peasant's pain,
 Suffices fulness to the swelling grain:
 The loaded trees their various fruits produce,
 And clust'ring grapes afford a gen'rous juice, &c.

As for her remark upon *ἀνοητοί*, it is of no validity; the word stands in opposition to *Δωμῶα*, and implies no more than here, or at a distance in general.

V. 1015, *The suitors heard, and deem'd the mirthful voice
 A signal of her Hymenæal choice.*]

It may be asked whence this conjecture of the suitors arises? Penelope is described as weeping grievously, and fainting away, and yet im-

Whilst one most jovial thus accosts the board;
 ' Too late the queen selects a second lord:
 In evil hour the nuptial rite intends,
 When o'er her son disastrous death impends.' 1020
 Thus he unskill'd of what the fates provide!
 But with severe rebuke Antinous cry'd:

These empty vaunts will make the voyage vain;
 Alarm not with discourse the menial train:
 The great event with silent hope attend; 1025
 Our deeds alone our counsel must commend.

mediately the suitors conclude she is preparing for the nuptials. Eustathius answers, that undoubtedly the suitors understood the queen had purified herself with water, and supplicated the goddess Minerva, though the poet omits the relation of such little particularities. But whence is it that the poet gives a greater share of wisdom to Euryclea than to Penelope? Penelope commands a servant to fly with the news of the absence of Telemachus to Laertes, which could not at all advantage Telemachus, and only grieve Laertes: Euryclea immediately diverts her from that vain intention, advises her to have recourse to heaven, and not add misery to the already miserable Laertes: this is wisdom in Euryclea. But it must be confessed that the other is nature in Penelope: Euryclea is calm, Penelope in a passion: and Homer would have been a very bad painter of human nature, if he had drawn Penelope, thus heated with passion, in the mild temper of Euryclea; grief and resentment give Penelope no time to deliberate, whereas Euryclea is less concerned, and consequently capable of thinking with more tranquillity.

V. 1022. *With rebuke severe Antinous cry'd.*] Antinous speaks thus in return to what had been before said by one of the suitors concerning Telemachus, viz. ' the queen little imagines that her son's death approaches; ' he fears lest Penelope should know their intentions, and hinder their measures by raising the subjects of Ithaca that still retained their fidelity. DACIER.

His speech thus ended short, he frowning rose,
 And twenty chiefs renown'd for valour chose :
 Down to the strand he speeds with haughty strides,
 Where anchor'd in the bay the vessel rides, 1030
 Replete with mail and military store,
 In all her tackle trim to quit the shore.
 The desp'rate crew ascend, unfurl the sails ;
 (The sea-ward prow invites the tardy gales)
 Then take repast, till Hesperus display'd 1035
 His golden circlet in the western shade.

Meantime the queen without reflection due,
 Heart-wounded, to the bed of state withdrew :
 In her sad breast the prince's fortunes roll,
 And hope and doubt alternate seize her soul. 1040
 So when the woodman's toil her cave surrounds,
 And with the hunter's cry the grove resounds ;
 With grief and rage the mother-lion stung,
 Fearless herself, yet trembles for her young.

While pensive in the silent slumb'rous shade, 1045
 Sleep's gentle pow'rs her drooping eyes invade ;

"V. 1041. *So when the woodman's toil, &c.*] The poet, to shew the majesty and high spirit of Penelope, compares her to a lioness: he manages the allusion very artfully: he describes the lioness not as exerting any dreadful acts of violence (for such a comparison is only proper to be applied to a hero), but enclosed by her enemies; which at once shews both her danger and nobleness of spirit under it: it is in the Greek *δολιον κυκλον*, which may signify either a circle of toils or nets, or a circle of enemies: the former is perhaps preferable, as corresponding best with the condition of Penelope, who was surrounded with the secret ambushes and snares of the suitors. EUSTATHIUS,

Minerva, life-like on embody'd air
 Impress'd the form of Iphthima the fair:
 (Icarius' daughter she, whose blooming charms
 Allur'd Eumelus to her virgin-arms; 1050
 A scepter'd lord, who o'er the fruitful plain
 Of Thessaly, wide stretch'd his ample reign:)
 As Pallas will'd, along the sable skies
 To calm the queen the phantom-sister flies.
 Swift on the regal dome descending right, 1055
 The bolted valves are pervious to her flight.
 Close to her head the pleasing vision stands,
 And thus performs Minerva's high commands.

V. 1047. *Minerva, life-like on embody'd air*
Impress'd the form, &c.]

We have here an imaginary being introduced by the poet: the whole is managed with great judgment; it is short, because it has not a direct and immediate relation to the progress of the poem, and because such imaginary intercourses have ever been looked upon as sudden in appearance, and as sudden in vanishing away. The use the poet makes of it, is to relieve Penelope from the extremity of despair, that she may act her part in the future scenes with courage and constancy. We see it is Minerva who sends this phantom to Penelope to comfort her: now this is an allegory to express, that as soon as the violence of sorrow was over, the mind of Penelope returned to some degree of tranquillity: Minerva is no more than the result of her own reflection and wisdom, which banished from her breast those melancholy apprehensions. The manner likewise of its introduction is not less judicious; the mind is apt to dwell upon those objects in sleep which make a deep impression when awake: this is the foundation of the poet's fiction; it is no more than a dream which he here describes, but he clothes it with a body, gives it a momentary existence, and by this method exalts a low circumstance into dignity and poetry.

O why, Penelope, this causeless fear,
 To render sleep's soft blessing insincere? 1060
 Alike devout to sorrow's dire extreme
 The day-reflection, and the midnight-dream!
 Thy son, the gods propitious will restore,
 And bid thee cease his absence to deplore.

To whom the queen, (whilst yet her pensive mind
 Was in the silent gates of sleep confin'd) 1066
 O sister, to my soul for ever dear,
 Why this first visit to reprove my fear?
 How in a realm so distant should you know
 From what deep source my ceaseless sorrows flow? 1070
 To all my hope my royal lord is lost,
 His country's buckler, and the Grecian boast:
 And with consummate woe to weigh me down,
 The heir of all his honours, and his crown,

V.1073. *And with consummate woe, &c.*] In the original, Penelope says plainly, she is more concerned for her son than her husband. I shall translate Dacier's observations upon this passage. We ought not to reproach Penelope for this seemingly shocking declaration, in preferring a son to a husband: her sentiment is natural and just; she had all the reason in the world to believe that Ulysses was dead, so that all her hopes, all her affection was entirely placed upon Telemachus: his loss therefore must unavoidably touch her with the highest degree of sensibility; if he is lost, she can have recourse to no second comfort. But why may we not allow the reason which Penelope herself gives for this superiority of sorrow for Telemachus? 'Telemachus,' says she, 'is unexperienced in the world, and unable to contend with difficulties: whereas Ulysses knew how to extricate himself upon all emergencies.' This is a sufficient reason why she should fear more for Telemachus than Ulysses: her affection might

My darling son is fled! an easy prey 1075
To the fierce storms, or men more fierce than they:
Who in a league of blood associates sworn,
Will intercept th' unwary youth's return.

Courage resume, the shadowy form reply'd,
In the protecting care of heav'n confide: 1080
On him attends the blue-ey'd martial maid;
What earthly can implore a surer aid?
Me now the guardian goddess deigns to send,
To bid thee patient his return attend.

The queen replies: If in the blest abodes 1085
A goddess, thou hast commerce with the gods;
Say, breathes my lord the blissful realm of light,
Or lies he wrapt in ever-during night?

Inquire not of his doom, the phantom cries,
I speak not all the counsel of the skies: 1090

be greater for Ulysses than Telemachus, yet her fears might be stronger for the son than the husband, Ulysses being capable to surmount dangers by experience, Telemachus being new to all difficulties.

V. 1089. *Inquire not of his doom, &c.*] It may be asked what is the reason of this conduct, and why should the phantom refuse to relate any thing concerning the condition of Ulysses? Eustathius answers, that if the phantom had related the full truth of the story, the poem had been at an end; the very constitution of it requires that Ulysses should arrive unknown to all, but chiefly to his wife, as will appear in the prosecution of the story: the question is very natural for an affectionate wife to make concerning an absent husband; but this being an improper place for the discovery, the poet defers the solution of it, till the unravelling of the whole in the conclusion of the poem.

Nor must indulge with vain discourse, or long,
The windy satisfaction of the tongue.

Swift through the valves the visionary fair
Repass'd, and viewless mix'd with common air.
The queen awakes, deliver'd of her woes: 1095
With florid joy her heart dilating glows:
The vision, manifest of future fate,
Makes her with hope her son's arrival wait.

Meantime the suitors plough the wat'ry plain,
Telemachus in thought already slain! 1100
When sight of less'ning Ithaca was lost,
Their sail directed for the Samian coast,
A small but verdant isle appear'd in view,
And Asteris th' advancing pilot knew:

The action of this book takes up the space of two nights and one day, so that from the opening of the poem to the introduction of Ulysses are six days completed.

But how long a time Telemachus afterwards staid with Menelaus is a question which has employed some modern French critics; one of which maintains, that he staid no longer than these two nights at Lacedæmon: but it is evident from the sequel of the *Odyssey*, that Telemachus arrived again at Ithaca two days after Ulysses; but Ulysses was twenty-nine days in passing from Ogygia to Ithaca, and consequently during that whole time Telemachus must have been absent from Ithaca. The ground of that critic's mistake was from the silence of Homer as to the exact time of his stay, which was of no importance, being distinguished by no action, and only in an epical part. The same thing led me into the like error in the note on V. 421 of the second book, where it was said that Telemachus returned to Ithaca in less than twelve days.

An ample port the rocks projected form, 1105
To break the rolling waves, and ruffling storm:
That safe recess they gain with happy speed,
And in close ambush wait the murd'rous deed.

THE
F I F T H B O O K
OF THE
ODYSSEY.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE DEPARTURE OF ULYSSES FROM CALYPSO.

PALLAS in a council of the gods complains of the detention of Ulysses in the island of Calypso; whereupon Mercury is sent to command his removal. The seat of Calypso described. She consents with much difficulty, and Ulysses builds a vessel with his own hands, on which he embarks. Neptune overtakes him with a terrible tempest, in which he is shipwrecked, and in the last danger of death; till Leucothea a sea-goddess assists him, and after innumerable perils he gets ashore on Phæacia.

THE
ODYSSEY.

BOOK V.*

THE saffron morn, with equal blushes spread,
Now rose refulgent from Tithonus' bed;
With new-born day to gladden mortal sight,
And gild the courts of heav'n with sacred light.

* Ulysses makes his first entry in this book. It may be asked where properly is the beginning of the action? It is not necessary that the beginning of the action should be the beginning of the poem; there is a natural and an artificial order, and Homer makes use of the latter. The action of the *Odyssey* properly begins neither with the poem, nor with the appearance of Ulysses here, but with the relation he makes of his departure from Troy in the ninth book. Bossu has very judiciously remarked, that in the constitution of the fable, the poet ought not to make the departure of a prince from his own country the foundation of his poem, but his return, and his stay in other places involuntary. For if the stay of Ulysses had been voluntary, he would have been guilty in some degree of all the disorders that happened during his absence. Thus in this book Ulysses first appears in a desolate island, sitting in tears by the side of the ocean, and looking upon it as the obstacle to his return.

This artificial order is of great use; it cuts off all languishing and unentertaining incidents, and passes over those intervals of time that are void of action; it gives continuity to the story, and at first trans-

Her hero's danger touch'd the pitying pow'r, 10
The nymph's seducements, and the magic bow'r.

Thus she began her plaint. Immortal Jove!
And you who fill the blissful seats above!
Let kings no more with gentle mercy sway,
Or bless a people willing to obey, 15
But crush the nations with an iron rod,
And ev'ry monarch be the scourge of god:
If from your thoughts Ulysses you remove,
Who rul'd his subjects with a father's love.
Sole in an isle, encircled by the main, 20
Abandon'd, banish'd from his native reign,
Unbless'd he sighs, detain'd by lawless charms,
And press'd unwilling in Calypso's arms.
Nor friends are there, nor vessels to convey,
Nor oars to cut th' immeasurable way. 25
And now fierce traitors, studious to destroy
His only son, their ambush'd fraud employ;
Who, pious, following his great father's fame,
To sacred Pylos and to Sparta came. 30

What words are these (reply'd the pow'r who forms
The clouds of night, and darkens heav'n with storms)
Is not already in thy soul decreed,
The chief's return shall make the guilty bleed?
What cannot Wisdom do? Thou may'st restore
The son in safety to his native shore; 35
While the fell foes who late in ambush lay,
With fraud defeated measure back their way.

Then thus to *Hermes* the command was giv'n.
Hermes, thou chosen messenger of heav'n!
 Go, to the nymph be these our orders borne: 40
 'Tis *Jove's* decree *Ulysses* shall return:
 The patient man shall view his old abodes,
 Nor help'd by mortal hand, nor guiding gods:

V. 43. *Nor help'd by mortal hand, nor guiding gods.*] This passage is intricate: why should *Jupiter* command *Ulysses* to return without the guidance either of man or god? *Ulysses* had been just declared the care of heaven, why should he be thus suddenly abandoned? *Eustathius* answers, that it is spoken solely with respect to the voyage which he immediately undertakes. This indeed shews a reason why this command is given; if he had been under the guidance of a god, the shipwreck (that great incident which brings about the whole catastrophe of the poem) must have been prevented by his power; and as for men, where were they to be procured in a desolate island? What confirms this opinion is, that during the whole shipwreck of *Ulysses*, there is no interposition of a deity, nor even of *Pallas*, who used to be his constant guardian; the reason is, because this command of *Jupiter* forbids all assistance to *Ulysses*: *Leucothea* indeed assists him, but it is not till he is shipwrecked. It appears further, that this interdiction respects only the voyage from *Ogygia*, because *Jupiter* orders that there shall be no assistance from man, *στε seaw πομπη, στ' ανθρωπων*; but *Ulysses* is transported from *Phæacia* to *Ithaca*, *ανθρωπων πομπη*, or by the assistance of the *Phæacians*, as *Eustathius* observes; and therefore what *Jupiter* here speaks has relation only to the present voyage. *Dacier* understands this to be meant of any visible assistance only: but this seems a collusion; for whether the gods assist visibly or invisibly, the effects are the same; and a deity unseen might have preserved *Ulysses* from storms, and directly guided him to his own country. But it was necessary for the design of *Homer*, that *Ulysses* should not sail directly home; if he had, there had been no room for the relation of his own adventures, and all those surprising narrations he makes to the *Phæacians*: *Homer*

In twice ten days shall fertile Scheria find,
 Alone, and floating to the wave and wind. 45
 The bold Phæacians there, whose haughty line
 Is mix'd with gods, half human, half divine,

therefore, to bring about the shipwreck of Ulysses, withdraws the gods.

V. 45. *Alone, and floating to the wave.*] The word in the original is *σχεδιης; νηος*, as Eustathius observes, is understood: it signifies, continues he, a small vessel made of one entire piece of wood, or a vessel about which little wood is used; it is derived from *σχεδον*, from being *αυτοσχεδιως*, *συμπεπηχθαι*, or compacted together with ease. Hesychius defines *σχεδια* to be *μικρα ναυς*, *η ξυλα α συνδεσσι, και νηον παλαισι*: that is, a small bark, or float of wood which sailors bind together, and immediately use in navigation. This observation appeared to me very necessary, to take off an objection made upon a following passage in this book: the critics have thought it incredible that Ulysses should without any assistance build such a vessel as Homer describes; but if we remember what kind of a vessel it is, it may be reconciled to probability.

V. 46. — — — *Whose haughty line
 Is mix'd with gods.*]

The Phæacians were the inhabitants of Scheria, sometimes called Drepanè, afterwards Corcyra, now Corfu, in the possession of the Venetians. But it may be asked in what these people resemble the gods? they are described as a most effeminate nation: whence then this godlike quality? Eustathius answers, that is either from their undisturbed felicity, or from their divine quality of general benevolence: he prefers the latter; but from the general character of the Phæacians, I should prefer the former. Homer frequently describes the gods as *αει ρειον ζωνοντες*, 'the gods that live in endless ease:' this

suitable to the Phæacians, as will appear more fully in the sequel of the Odyssey. Eustathius remarks, that the poet here gives us in a few lines the heads of the eight succeeding books; and sure nothing can be a greater instance of Homer's art, than his building so noble

The chief shall honour as some heav'nly guest,
 And swift transport him to his place of rest.
 His vessels loaded with a plenteous store 50
 Of brass, of vestures, and resplendent ore;
 (A richer prize than if his joyful isle
 Receiv'd him charg'd with Ilion's noble spoil)
 His friends, his country, he shall see, though late;
 Such is our sov'reign will, and such is fate. 55
 He spoke. The god who mounts the winged winds
 Fast to his feet the golden pinions binds,
 That high through fields of air his flight sustain
 O'er the wide earth, and o'er the boundless main.
 He grasps the wand that causes sleep to fly, 60
 Or in soft slumber seals the wakeful eye:
 Then shoots from heav'n to high Pieria's steep,
 And stoops incumbent on the rolling deep.

an edifice upon so small a foundation: the plan is simple and unadorned, but he embellishes it with all the beauties in nature.

V. 56. *The god who mounts the winged winds.*] This is a noble description of Mercury; the verses are lofty and sonorous. Virgil has inserted them in his *Æneis*, lib. iv. 240.

— — — ' pedibus talaria nectit
 Aurea: quæ sublimem alis, sive æquora supra,
 Seu terram, rapido pariter cum flamine portant:
 Tum virgam capit: hæc animas ille evocat Orco
 Pallentes, alias sub tristia Tartara mittit;
 Dat somnos adimitque, et lumina morte resignat.'

What is here said of the rod of Mercury, is, as Eustathius observes, an allegory: it is intended to shew the force of eloquence, which has a power to calm, or excite, to raise a passion, or compose it: Mer-

So wat'ry fowl, that seek their fishy food,
 With wings expanded o'er the foaming flood, 65
 Now sailing smooth the level surface sweep,
 Now dip their pinions in the briny deep.
 Thus o'er the world of waters Hermes flew,
 Till now the distant island rose in view:
 Then swift ascending from the azure wave, 70
 He took the path that winded to the cave.
 Large was the grot, in which the nymph he found,
 (The fair hair'd nymph with ev'ry beauty crown'd)

cury is the god of eloquence, and he may very properly be said *καταγγεῖν*, καὶ ἀγγεῖν, to cool or inflame the passions according to the allegorical sense of these expressions.

V. 64. *So wat'ry fowl.*] Eustathius remarks, that this is a very just allusion; had the poet compared Mercury to an eagle, though the comparison had been more noble, yet it had been less proper; a sea-fowl most properly represents the passage of a deity over the seas; the comparison being adapted to the element.

Some ancient critics marked the last verse τῷ μάλῳ, &c. with an obelisk, a sign that it ought to be rejected: they thought that the word *οχλαστο* did not sufficiently express the swiftness of the flight of Mercury; the word implies no more than 'he was carried:' but this expression is applicable to any degree of swiftness; for where is the impropriety, if we say, Mercury was borne along the seas with the utmost rapidity? The word is most properly applied to a chariot, *ἐπιὸν ἄρῃ, ὃ ἐστὶν ἀρμαλός*. EUSTATHIUS.

V. 72. *The nymph he found.*] Homer here introduces an episode of Calypso: and as every incident ought to have some relation to the main design of the poem, it may be asked what relation this bears to the other parts of it? A very essential one: the sufferings of Ulysses are the subject of the Odyssey: here we find him enclosed in an island: all his calamities arise from his absence from his own country: Calypso then, who detains him, is the cause of all his calamities. It

She sat and sung; the rocks resound her lays :
 The cave was brighten'd with a rising blaze : 75
 Cedar and frankincense, an od'rous pile,
 Flam'd on the hearth, and wide perfum'd the isle;
 While she with work and song the time divides,
 And through the loom the golden shuttle guides.

is with great judgment that the poet feigns him to be restrained by a deity, rather than a mortal. It might have appeared somewhat derogatory from the prudence and courage of Ulysses, not to have been able by art or strength to have freed himself from the power of a mortal: but by this conduct the poet at once excuses his hero, and aggravates his misfortunes: he is detained involuntarily, but it is a goddess who detains him, and it is no disgrace for a man not to be able to overpower a deity.

Bossu observes, that the art of disguise is part of the character of Ulysses: now this is implied in the name of Calypso, which signifies concealment, or secret. The poet makes his hero stay seven whole years with this goddess; she taught him so well, that he afterwards lost no opportunities of putting her instructions in practice, and does nothing without disguise.

Virgil has borrowed part of his description of Circe in the seventh book of the *Æneis*, from this of Calypso.

— — — ‘ ubi Solis filia lucos
 Assiduo resonet cantu, tectisque superbis
 Urit odoratam nocturna in lumina cedrum,
 Arguto tenues percurrens pectine telas.’

What I have here said shews likewise the necessity of this machine of Mercury: it is an established rule of Horace.

‘ Nec deus intersit, nisi dignus vindice nodus
 Inciderit:’

Calypso was a goddess, and consequently all human means were insufficient to deliver Ulysses. There was therefore a necessity to have recourse to the gods.

Without the grot, a various silvan scene 80
 Appear'd around, and groves of living green;
 Poplars and alders ever quiv'ring play'd,
 And nodding cypress form'd a fragrant shade;
 On whose high branches, waving with the storm,
 The birds of broadest wing their mansion form, 85
 The chough, the sea-mew, the loquacious crow,
 And scream aloft, and skim the deeps below.
 Depending vines the shelving cavern screen,
 With purple clusters blushing through the green.
 Four limpid fountains from the clefts distil, 90
 And ev'ry fountain pours a sev'ral rill,
 In mazy windings wand'ring down the hill:

V. 80. *The bow'r of Calypso.*] It is impossible for a painter to draw a more admirable rural landscape: the bower of Calypso is the principal figure, surrounded with a shade of different trees: green meadows adorned with flowers, beautiful fountains, and vines loaded with clusters of grapes, and birds hovering in the air, are seen in the liveliest colours in Homer's poetry. But whoever observes the particular trees, plants, birds, &c. will find another beauty of propriety in this description, every part being adapted, and the whole scene drawn agreeable to a country situate by the sea.

V. 89. *With purple clusters blushing through the green.*] Eustathius endeavours to fix the season of the year when Ulysses departed from that island; he concludes it to be in the latter end of autumn, or the beginning of winter; for Calypso is described as making use of a fire; so is Arete in the sixth book, and Eumæus and Ulysses in other parts of the Odyssey. This gives us reason to conclude, that the summer heats were past; and what makes it still more probable is, that a vine is in this place said to be loaded with grapes, which plainly confines the season of the year to the autumn.

Where bloomy meads with vivid greens were crown'd;
And glowing violets threw odours round,
A scene, where if a god should cast his sight, . 95
A god might gaze, and wander with delight!
Joy touch'd the messenger of heav'n: he stay'd
Entranc'd, and all the blissful haunt survey'd.
Him, ent'ring in the cave, Calypso knew;
For pow'rs celestial to each other's view 100
Stand still confess'd, though distant far they lie
To habitants of earth, or sea, or sky.
But sad Ulysses, by himself apart,
Pour'd the big sorrows of his swelling heart;
All on the lonely shore he sat to weep, 105
And roll'd his eyes around the restless deep;

V. 103. *But sad Ulysses, by himself apart.*] Eustathius imagines, that the poet describes Ulysses absent from Calypso, to the end that Calypso might lay a seeming obligation upon Ulysses, by appearing to dismiss him voluntarily: for Ulysses being absent, could not know that Mercury had commanded his departure; so that this favour appears to proceed from the sole kindness of the goddess. Dacier dislikes this observation, and shews that decency requires the absence of Ulysses; if the poet had described him in the company of Calypso, it might have given suspicion of an amorous disposition, and he might seem content with his absence from his country: but the very nature of the poem requires that he should be continually endeavouring to return to it: the poet therefore with great judgment describes him agreeably to his character; his mind is entirely taken up with his misfortunes, and neglecting all the pleasures which a goddess could confer, he entertains himself with his own melancholy reflections, sitting in solitude upon the sea-shore.

Tow'rd his lov'd coast he roll'd his eyes in vain,
Till dimm'd with rising grief, they stream'd again.

Now graceful seated on her shining throne,
To Hermes thus the nymph divine begun. 110

God of the golden wand! on what behest
Arriv'st thou here, an unexpected guest?
Lov'd as thou art, thy free injunctions lay;
'Tis mine, with joy and duty to obey.
Till now a stranger, in a happy hour 115
Approach, and taste the dainties of my bow'r.

Thus having spoke, the nymph the table spread,
(Ambrosial cates, with nectar rosy-red)
Hermes the hospitable rite partook,
Divine refection! then recruited, spoke. 120

What mov'd this journey from my native sky,
A goddess asks, nor can a god deny:
Hear then the truth. By mighty Jove's command
Unwilling, have I trod this pleasing land;
For who, self-mov'd, with weary wing would sweep
Such length of ocean and unmeasur'd deep: 126
A world of waters! far from all the ways
Where men frequent, or sacred altars blaze?
But to Jove's will submission we must pay;
What pow'r so great, to dare to disobey? 130
A man, he says, a man resides with thee,
Of all his kind most worn with misery:
The Greeks (whose arms for nine long years employ'd
Their force on Ilion, in the tenth destroy'd)

At length embarking in a luckless hour, 135
 With conquest proud, incens'd Minerva's pow'r:
 Hence on the guilty race her vengeance hurl'd
 With storms pursued them through the liquid world.
 There all his vessels sunk beneath the wave!
 There all his dear companions found their grave! 140
 Sav'd from the jaws of death by heav'n's decree,
 The tempest drove him to these shores and thee.
 Him, Jove now orders to his native lands
 Straight to dismiss; so destiny commands:
 Impatient fate his near return attends, 145
 And calls him to his country, and his friends.
 Ev'n to her inmost soul the goddess shook;
 Then thus her anguish and her passion broke.
 Ungracious gods! with spite and envy curst!
 Still to your own ethereal race the worst! 150
 Ye envy mortal and immortal joy,
 And love, the only sweet of life, destroy.
 Did ever goddess by her charms engage
 A favour'd mortal, and not feel your rage?
 So when Aurora sought Orion's love, 155
 Her joys disturb'd your blissful hours above,

V. 155. *Orion.*] The love of Calypso to Ulysses might seem too bold a fiction, and contrary to all credibility, Ulysses being a mortal, she a goddess: Homer therefore, to soften the relation, brings in instances of the like passion in Orion and Iasion; and by this he fully justifies his own conduct, the poet being at liberty to make use of any prevailing story, though it were all fable and fiction.

But why should the death of Orion be here ascribed to Diana;

Till in Ortygia, Dian's winged dart
 Had pierc'd the hapless hunter to the heart.
 So when the covert of the thrice-car'd field
 Saw stately Ceres to her passion yield, 160
 Scarce could Iasion taste her heav'nly charms,
 But Jove's swift lightning scorch'd him in her arms.
 And is it now my turn, ye mighty pow'rs!
 Am I the envy of your blissful bow'rs?
 A man, an outcast to the storm and wave, 165
 It was my crime to pity, and to save;

whereas in other places she is said to exercise her power only over women? The reason is, she slew him for offering violence to her chastity; for though Homer be silent about his crime, yet Horace relates it.

— — — 'Integræ
 Tentator Orion Dianæ
 Virgineâ domitus sagittâ.'

Eustathius gives another reason why Aurora is said to be in love with Orion. He was a great hunter, as appears from the eleventh book of the Odyssey; and the morning or Aurora is most favourable to those diversions.

V. 161. *Scarce could Iasion, &c.*] Ceres is here understood allegorically, to signify the earth; Iasion was a great husbandman, and consequently Ceres may easily be feigned to be in love with him: the thunderbolt with which he is slain signifies the excess of heat, which frequently disappoints the hopes of the labourer. EUSTATHIUS.

V. 165. *A man, an outcast to the storm and wave,
 It was my crime to pity, and to save, &c.*]

Homer in this speech of Calypso shews very naturally how passion misguides the understanding. She views her own cause in the most advantageous, but false light, and thence concludes, that Jupiter offers a piece of injustice in commanding the departure of Ulysses:

When he who thunders rent his bark in twain,
And sunk his brave companions in the main.
Alone, abandon'd, in mid-ocean tost,
The sport of winds, and driv'n from ev'ry coast, 170
Hither this man of miseries I led,
Receiv'd the friendless, and the hungry fed;
Nay promis'd (vainly promis'd!) to bestow
Immortal life, exempt from age and woe.
'Tis past — and Jove decrees he shall remove; 175
Gods as we are, we are but slaves to Jove.
Go then he may; (he must, if he ordain,
Try all those dangers, all those decps, again)
But never, never shall Calypso send
To toils like these, her husband and her friend. 180
What ships have I, what sailors to convey,
What oars to cut the long laborious way?
Yet, I'll direct the safest means to go:
That last advice is all I can bestow.

she tells Mercury, that it is she who had preserved his life, who had entertained him with affection, and offered him immortality; and would Jupiter thus repay her tenderness to Ulysses? Would Jupiter force him from a place where nothing was wanting to his happiness, and expose him again to the like dangers from which she had preserved him? this was an act of cruelty. But on the contrary, she speaks not one word concerning the truth of the cause: viz. that she offered violence to the inclinations of Ulysses; that she made him miserable by detaining him, not only from his wife, but from his whole dominions; and never considers that Jupiter is just in delivering him from his captivity. This is a very lively, though unhappy picture of human nature, which is too apt to fall into error, and then endeavours to justify an error by a seeming reason. DACIER.

To her, the pow'r who bears the charming rod.
 Dismiss the man, nor irritate the god; 186
 Prevent the rage of him who reigns above,
 For what so dreadful as the wrath of Jove?
 Thus having said, he cut the cleaving sky,
 And in a moment vanish'd from her eye. 190
 The nymph, obedient to divine command,
 To seek Ulysses, pac'd along the sand.
 Him pensive on the lonely beach she found,
 With streaming eyes in briny torrents drown'd,
 And inly pining for his native shore; 195
 For now the soft enchantress pleas'd no more:
 For now, reluctant, and constrain'd by charms,
 Absent he lay in her desiring arms,

V. 198. *Absent he lay in her desiring arms.*] This passage has fallen under the severe censure of the critics, they condemn it as an act of conjugal infidelity, and a breach of morality in Ulysses: it would be sufficient to answer, that a poet is not obliged to draw a perfect character in the person of his hero: perfection is not to be found in human life, and consequently ought not to be ascribed to it in poetry: neither Achilles nor Æneas are perfect characters: Æneas in particular, is as guilty, with respect to Dido, in the desertion of her, (for Virgil tells us they were married, '*connubio jungam stabili*') as Ulysses can be imagined to be by the most severe critic, with respect to Calypso.

But those who have blamed this passage, form their judgments from the morality of these ages, and not from the theology of the ancients: polygamy was then allowed, and even concubinage, without being esteemed any breach of conjugal fidelity: if this be not admitted, the heathen gods are as guilty as the heathen heroes, and Jupiter and Ulysses are equally criminals.

In slumber wore the heavy night away,
On rocks and shores consum'd the tedious day;
There sat all desolate, and sigh'd alone, 201
With echoing sorrows made the mountains groan,
And roll'd his eyes o'er all the restless main,
Till dimm'd with rising grief, they stream'd again.

Here, on the musing mood the goddess press'd,
Approaching soft; and thus the chief address'd. 206
Unhappy man! to wasting woes a prey,
No more in sorrows languish life away:
Free as the winds I give thee now to rove—
Go, fell the timber of yon' lofty grove, 210
And form a raft, and build the rising ship,
Sublime to bear thee o'er the gloomy deep.
To store the vessel let the care be mine,
With water from the rock, and rosy wine,
And life-sustaining bread, and fair array, 215
And prosp'rous gales to waft thee on the way.
These if the gods with my desires comply,
(The gods alas more mighty far than I,
And better skill'd in dark events to come)
In peace shall land thee at thy native home. 220

With sighs, Ulysses heard the words she spoke,
Then thus his melancholy silence broke.

This very passage shews the sincere affection which Ulysses retained for his wife Penelope; even a goddess cannot persuade him to forget her; his person is in the power of Calypso, but his heart is with Penelope. Tully had this book of Homer in his thought when he said of Ulysses, '*Vetulam suam prætulit immortalitati.*'

Some other motive, goddess! sways thy mind,
 (Some close design, or turn of womankind)
 Nor my return the end, nor this the way, 225
 On a slight raft to pass the swelling sea
 Huge, horrid, vast! where scarce in safety sails
 The best built ship, though Jove inspire the gales.
 The bold proposal how shall I fulfill;
 Dark as I am, unconscious of thy will? 230
 Swear then, thou mean'st not what my soul forbodes;
 Swear by the solemn oath that binds the gods.

Him, while he spoke, with smiles Calypso ey'd,
 And gently grasp'd his hand, and thus reply'd.
 This shews thee, friend, by old experience taught, 235
 And learn'd in all the wiles of human thought.
 How prone to doubt, how cautious are the wise?
 But hear, oh earth, and hear, ye sacred skies!

V. 222. *Then thus his melancholy silence broke.*] It may be asked what occasions this conduct in Ulysses? he has long been desirous to return to his country, why then his melancholy at the proposal of it? this proceeds from his apprehensions of insincerity in Calypso: he had long been unable to obtain his dismissal with the most urgent entreaties: this voluntary kindness therefore seems suspicious. He is ignorant that Jupiter had commanded his departure, and therefore fears lest his obstinate desire of leaving her should have provoked her to destroy him, under a shew of complying with his inclinations. This is an instance that Ulysses is not only wise in extricating himself from difficulties, but cautious in guarding against dangers.

V. 238. *But hear, on earth, and hear, ye sacred skies!*] The oath of Calypso is introduced with the utmost solemnity. Rapsin allows it to be an instance of true sublimity. The ancients attested all nature in their oaths, that all nature might conspire to punish

And thou, oh Styx ! whose formidable floods
 Glide through the shades, and bind th' attesting gods !
 No form'd design, no meditated end 241
 Lurks in the counsel of thy faithful friend ;
 Kind the persuasion, and sincere my aim ;
 The same my practice, were my fate the same.
 Heav'n has not curs'd me with a heart of steel, 245
 But giv'n the sense, to pity, and to feel.

Thus having said, the goddess march'd before :
 He trod her footsteps in the sandy shore.
 At the cool cave arriv'd, they took their state ;
 He fill'd the throne where Mercury had sat, 250
 For him, the nymph a rich repast ordains,
 Such as the mortal life of man sustains ;

their perjuries. Virgil has imitated this passage, but has not copied the full beauty of the original.

‘ *Esto nunc sol testis, et hæc mihi terra precanti.*’

It is the remark of Grotius, that the like expression is found in Deuteronomy, ‘ Hear, O ye heavens, the words that I speak, and let the earth hear the words of my mouth.’ Which may always most literally be rendered by this verse of Homer.

Ἰστω νυν τοδε γαῖα, καὶ ἑρᾶνος εὐρυς ὑπερθευ.

V. 251. *For him, the nymph a rich repast ordains.*] The passage of love is nowhere described in all Homer, but in this passage between Calypso and Ulysses; and we find that the poet is not unsuccessful in drawing the tender, as well as the fiercer passions. This seemingly trifling circumstance is an instance of it; love delights to oblige, and the least offices receive a value from the person who performs them: this is the reason why Calypso serves Ulysses with her own hands: her damsels attend her, but love makes it a pleasure to her to attend Ulysses. EUSTATHIUS.

Before herself were plac'd the cates divine,
 Ambrosial banquet, and celestial wine.
 Their hunger satiate, and their thirst repress, 255
 Thus spoke Calypso to her godlike guest.

Ulysses! (with a sigh she thus began)
 O sprung from gods! In wisdom more than man.
 Is then thy home the passion of thy heart?
 Thus wilt thou leave me, are we thus to part? 260
 Farewel! and ever joyful may'st thou be,
 Nor break the transport with one thought of me,
 But ah Ulysses! wert thou given to know
 What fate yet dooms thee, yet, to undergo;

Calypso shews more fondness for Ulysses, than Ulysses for Calypso: indeed Ulysses had been no less than seven years in the favour of that goddess; it was a kind of matrimony, and husbands are not altogether so fond as lovers. But the true reason is, a more tender behaviour had been contrary to the character of Ulysses; it is necessary that his stay should be by constraint, that he should continually be endeavouring to return to his own country; and consequently to have discovered too great a degree of satisfaction in any thing during his absence, had outraged his character. His return is the main hinge upon which the whole Odyssey turns, and therefore no pleasure, not even a goddess, ought to divert him from it.

V. 263. *But ah Ulysses! wert thou given to know
 What fate yet dooms thee.]*

This is another instance of the tyranny of the passion of love: Calypso had received a command to dismiss Ulysses; Mercury had laid before her the fatal consequences of her refusal, and she had promised to send him away; but her love here again prevails over her reason; she frames excuses still to detain him, and though she dares not keep him, she knows not how to part with him. This is a true picture of

Thy heart might settle in this scene of ease, 265
 And ev'n these slighted charms might learn to please.
 A willing goddess and immortal life,
 Might banish from thy mind an absent wife.
 Am I inferior to a mortal dame?
 Less soft my feature, less august my frame? 270
 Or shall the daughters of mankind compare
 Their earth-born beauties with the heav'nly fair?

Alas! for this (the prudent man replies)
 Against Ulysses shall thy anger rise?
 Lov'd and ador'd, oh goddess as thou art, 275
 Forgive the weakness of a human heart.
 Though well I see thy graces far above
 The dear, though mortal, object of my love,
 Of youth eternal well the difference know,
 And the short date of fading charms below; 280
 Yet ev'ry day, while absent thus I roam,
 I languish to return, and die at home.

nature; love this moment resolves, the next breaks these resolutions: she had promised to obey Jupiter, in not detaining Ulysses; but she endeavours to persuade Ulysses not to go away.

V. 277. *Though well I see thy graces far above
 The dear, though mortal, object of my love.*]

Ulysses shews great address in this answer to Calypso; he softens the severity of it, by first asking a favourable acceptance of what he is about to say; he calls her his adored goddess, and places Penelope in every degree below the perfections of Calypso. As it is the nature of women not to endure a rival, Ulysses assigns the desire of his return to another cause than the love of Penelope, and ascribes it solely to the love he bears his country. EUSTATHIUS.

Whate'er the gods shall destine me to bear
In the black ocean, or the wat'ry war,
'Tis mine to master with a constant mind; 285
Inur'd to perils, to the worst resign'd.
By seas, by wars, so many dangers run;
Still I can suffer: their high will be done!

Thus while he spoke, the beamy sun descends,
And rising night her friendly shade extends. 290
To the close grot the lonely pair remove,
And slept delighted with the gifts of love.
When rosy morning call'd them from their rest,
Ulysses robed him in the cloak and vest.
The nymph's fair head a veil transparent grac'd,
Her swelling loins a radiant zone embrac'd 296
With flow'rs of gold: an under robe, unbound,
In snowy waves flow'd glitt'ring on the ground.
Forth-issuing thus, she gave him first to wield
A weighty ax, with truest temper steel'd, 300
And double edg'd; the handle smooth and plain,
Wrought of the clouded olive's easy grain;
And next, a wedge to drive with sweepy sway:
Then to the neighb'ring forest led the way.
On the lone island's utmost verge there stood 305
Of poplars, pines, and firs, a lofty wood,
Whose leafless summits to the skies aspire,
Scorch'd by the sun, or scar'd by heav'nly fire:
(Alrcady dry'd.) These pointing out to view, 309
The nymph just shew'd him, and with tears withdrew.

Now toils the hero; trees on trees o'erthrown
 Fall crackling round him, and the forest groan:
 Sudden, full twenty on the plain are strow'd,
 And lopp'd, and lighten'd of their branchy load.
 At equal angles these dispos'd to join, 315
 He smooth and squar'd 'em, by the rule and line.
 (The wimbles for the work Calypso found)
 With those he pierc'd 'em, and with clinchers bound.

V.311, &c. *Ulysses builds his ship.*] This passage has fallen under censure, as outraging all probability: Rapin believes it to be impossible for one man alone to build so complete a vessel in the compass of four days; and perhaps the same opinion might lead Bossu into mistake, who allows twenty days to Ulysses in building it; he applies the word *εικοσι*, or *twenty*, to the days, which ought to be applied to the trees; *δρυδρα* is understood, for the poet immediately after declares that the whole was completed in the space of four days; neither is there any thing incredible in the description. I have observed already that this vessel is but *Σχεδια*, a *float*, or *raft*; it is true, Ulysses cuts down twenty trees to build it; this may seem too great a provision of materials for so small an undertaking: but why should we imagine these to be large trees? The description plainly shews the contrary, for it had been impossible to have felled twenty large trees in the space of four days, much more to have built a vessel proportionable to such materials: but the vessel was but small, and consequently such were the trees. Homer calls these dry trees; this is not inserted without reason, for green wood is unfit for navigation.

Homer in this passage shews his skill in mechanics; a shipwright could not have described a vessel more exactly; but what is chiefly valuable is the insight it gives us to what degree this art of ship-building was then arrived: we find likewise what use navigators made of astronomy in those ages; so that this passage deserves a double regard, as a fine piece of poetry, and a valuable remain of antiquity.

Long and capacious as a shipwright forms
 Some bark's broad bottom to outride the storms, 320
 So large he built the raft: then ribb'd it strong
 From space to space, and nail'd the planks along;
 These form'd the sides: the deck he fashion'd last;
 Then o'er the vessel rais'd the taper mast,
 With crossing sail-yards dancing in the wind; 325
 And to the helm the guiding rudder join'd.
 (With yielding osiers fenc'd, to break the force
 Of surging waves, and steer the steady course)
 Thy loom, Calypso! for the future sails
 Supply'd the cloth, capacious of the gales. 330

V. 317. (*The wimbles for the work Calypso found.*) And

V. 329. *Thy loom, Calypso! for the future sails
 Supply'd the cloth.]*

It is remarkable that Calypso brings the tools to Ulysses at several times: this is another instance of the nature of love; it seeks opportunities to be in the company of the beloved person. Calypso is an instance of it: she frequently goes away, and frequently returns: she delays the time, by not bringing all the implements at once to Ulysses; so that though she cannot divert him from the resolution of leaving her, yet she protracts his stay.

It may be necessary to make some observation in general upon this passage of Calypso and Ulysses. Mr. Dryden has been very severe upon it. 'What are the tears,' says he, 'of Calypso for being left, to the fury and death of Dido? Where is there the whole process of her passion, and all its violent effects to be found, in the languishing episode of the Odyssey?' Much may be said in vindication of Homer; there is a wide difference between the characters of Dido and Calypso; Calypso is a goddess, and consequently not liable to the same passions as an enraged woman: yet disappointed love being always an outrageous passion, Homer makes her break out into blasphemies

With stays and cordage last he rigg'd the ship,
And, roll'd on levers, lanch'd her in the deep.

Four days were past, and now the work complete,
Shone the fifth morn: when from her sacred seat
The nymph dismiss'd him (od'rous garments giv'n)
And bath'd in fragrant oils that breath'd of heav'n: 336

against Jupiter and all the gods. 'But the same process of love is not found in Homer as in Virgil?' it is true, and Homer had been very injudicious if he had inserted it. The time allows it not; it was necessary for Homer to describe the conclusion of Calypso's passion, not the beginning or process of it. It was necessary to carry on the main design of the poem, viz. the departure of Ulysses, in order to his re-establishment; and not amuse the reader with a detail of a passion that was so far from contributing to the end of the poem, that it was the greatest impediment to it. If the poet had found an enlargement necessary to his design, had he attempted a full description of the passion, and then failed, Mr. Dryden's criticism had been judicious. Virgil had a fair opportunity to expatiate, nay, the occasion required it, inasmuch as the love of Dido contributed to the design of the poem; it brought about her assistance to Æneas, and the preservation of his companions; and consequently the copiousness of Virgil is as judicious as the conciseness of Homer. I allow Virgil's to be a masterpiece: perhaps no images are more happily drawn in all that poet; but the passages in the two authors are not similar, and consequently admit of no comparison: would it not have been insufferable in Homer, to have stepped seven years backward, to describe the process of Calypso's passion, when the very nature of the poem requires that Ulysses should immediately return to his own country? ought the action to be suspended for a fine description? But an opposite conduct was judicious in both the poets, and therefore Virgil is commendable for giving us the whole process of a love-passion in Dido, Homer for only relating the conclusion of it in Calypso. I will only add, that Virgil has borrowed his machinery from Homer, and that the departure of Æneas and Ulysses is brought about by the command of Jupiter, and the descent of Mercury.

Then fill'd two goat-skins with her hands divine,
 With water one, and one with sable wine:
 Of every kind, provisions heav'd aboard;
 And the full decks with copious viands stor'd. 340
 The goddess, last, a gentle breeze supplies;
 To curl old Ocean, and to warm the skies.

And now rejoicing in the prosp'rous gales,
 With beating heart Ulysses spreads his sails;
 Plac'd at the helm he sat, and mark'd the skies, 345
 Nor clos'd in sleep his ever-watchful eyes.
 There view'd the Pleiads, and the northern team,
 And great Orion's more refulgent beam,
 To which, around the axle of the sky
 The bear revolving, points his golden eye: 350
 Who shines exalted on th' ethereal plain,
 Nor bathes his blazing forehead in the main.
 Far on the left those radiant fires to keep
 The nymph directed, as he sail'd the deep.

V. 344. — — — *Ulysses spreads his sails.*] It is observable that the poet passes over the parting of Calypso and Ulysses in silence; he leaves it to be imagined by the reader, and prosecutes his main action. Nothing but a cold compliment could have proceeded from Ulysses, he being overjoyed at the prospect of returning to his country: it was therefore judicious in Homer to omit the relation; and not draw Calypso in tears, and Ulysses in a transport of joy. Besides, it was necessary to shorten the episode: the commands of Jupiter were immediately to be obeyed; and the story being now turned to Ulysses, it was requisite to put him immediately upon action, and describe him endeavouring to re-establish his own affairs, which is the whole design of the *Odyssey*.

Full sev'nteen nights he cut the foamy way; 355
 The distant land appear'd the following day:
 Then swell'd to sight Phæacia's dusky coast,
 And woody mountains, half in vapours lost:
 That lay before him, indistinct and vast,
 Like a broad shield amid the wat'ry waste. 360

V. 355. *Full sev'nteen nights he cut the foamy way.*] It may seem incredible that one person should be able to manage a vessel seventeen days without any assistance; but Eustathius vindicates Homer by an instance that very much resembles this of Ulysses. A certain Pamphylian being taken prisoner, and carried to Tarniathis (afterwards Damietta) in Egypt, continued there several years; but being continually desirous to return to his country, he pretends a skill in sea affairs: this succeeds, and he is immediately employed in maritime business, and permitted the liberty to follow it according to his own inclination, without any inspection. He made use of this opportunity, and furnishing himself with a sail, and provisions for a long voyage, committed himself to the sea all alone; he crossed that vast extent of waters that lies between Egypt and Pamphylia, and arrived safely in his own country: in memory of this prodigious event he changed his name, and was called *μονοναυτης*, or the *sole-sailor*; and the family was not extinct in the days of Eustathius.

*It may not be improper to observe, that this description of Ulysses sailing alone, is a demonstration of the smallness of his vessel; for it is impossible that a large one could be managed by a single person. It is indeed said that twenty trees were taken down for the vessel, but this does not imply that all the trees were made use of, but only so much of them as was necessary to his purpose.

V, 360. *Like a broad shield amid the wat'ry waste.*] This expression gives a very lively idea of an island of small extent, that is, of a form more long than large: Aristarchus, instead of *πῖνον*, writes *ἐπῖνον*, or resembling a *fig*; others tell us, that *πῖνον* is used by the Illyrians to signify *αχλὺς*, or a *mist*; this likewise very well represents the first appearance of land to those that sail at a distance; it

But him, thus voyaging the deeps below,
 From far, on Solymé's aerial brow,
 The king of Ocean saw, and seeing burn'd,
 (From Ethiopia's happy climes return'd)
 The raging monarch shook his azure head, 365
 And thus in secret to his soul he said.

Heav'ns! how uncertain are the pow'rs on high?
 Is then revers'd the sentence of the sky,
 In one man's favour; while a distant guest
 I shar'd secure the Ethiopian feast? 370
 Behold how near Phæaciá's land he draws!
 The land, affix'd by fate's eternal laws

appears indistinct and confused, or, as it is here expressed, *like a mist*.
 EUSTATHIUS.

V. 362. *From Solymé's aerial brow.*] There is some difficulty in this passage. Strabo, as Eustathius observes, affirms that the expression of Neptune's seeing Ulysses from the mountain of Solymé, is to be taken in a general sense, and not to denote the Solymæan mountains in Pisidia; but other eastern mountains that bear the same appellation. In propriety, the Solymæans inhabit the summits of mount Taurus, from Lycia even to Pisidia; these were very distant from the passage of Neptune from the Ethiopians, and consequently could not be the mountains intended by Homer; we must therefore have recourse to the preceding assertion of Strabo, for a solution of the difficulty. Dacier endeavours to explain it another way; who knows, says she, but that the name of Solymæan was anciently extended to all very elevated mountains? Bochart affirms, that the word Solimy is derived from the Hebrew *selem*, or *darkness*: why then might not this be a general appellation? But this is all conjecture, and it is much more probable that such a name should be given to some mountains by way of distinction, and emphatically, from some peculiar and extraordinary quality, than extend itself to all very lofty mountains, which could only introduce confusion and error.

To end his toils. Is then our anger vain?

No; if this sceptre yet commands the main.

He spoke, and high the forky trident hurl'd, 375

Rolls clouds on clouds, and stirs the wat'ry world,

At once the face of earth and sea deforms,

Swells all the winds, and rouses all the storms.

Down rush'd the night; east, west, together roar;

And south, and north, roll mountains to the shore;

Then shook the hero, to despair resign'd, 381

And question'd thus his yet-unconquer'd mind.

Wretch that I am! what farther fates attend

This life of toils, and what my destin'd end?

Too well alas! the island goddess knew, 385

On the black sea what perils should ensue.

New horrors now this destin'd head enclose;

Unfill'd is yet the measure of my woes;

With what a cloud the brows of heav'n are crown'd?

What raging winds? what roaring waters round? 390

'Tis Jove himself the swelling tempest rears;

Death, present death on ev'ry side appears.

Happy! thrice happy! who, in battlè slain,

Press'd, in Atrides' cause, the Trojan plain:

V. 393. *Happy! thrice happy! who, in battle slain,
Press'd, in Atrides' cause, the Trojan plain.*]

Plutarch in his *Symposiacs* relates a memorable story concerning Memmius, the Roman general: when he had sacked the city Corinth, and made slaves of those who survived the ruin of it, he commanded one of the youths of a liberal education to write down some sentence

Oh! had I dy'd before that well-fought wall; 395
 Had some distinguish'd day renown'd my fall;
 (Such as was that, when show'rs of jav'lin's fled
 From conqu'ring Troy around Achilles dead)

in his presence, according to his own inclinations. The youth immediately wrote this passage from Homer.

'Happy! thrice happy! who, in battle slain,
 Press'd, in Atrides' cause, the Trojan plain.'

Memmius immediately burst into tears, and gave the youth and all his relations their liberty.

Virgil has translated this passage in the first book of his *Æneis*. The storm and the behaviour of Æneas are copied exactly from it. The storm, in both the poets, is described concisely, but the images are full of terror; Homer leads the way, and Virgil treads in his steps without any deviation. Ulysses falls into lamentation, so does Æneas: Ulysses wishes he had found a nobler death, so does Æneas: this discovers a bravery of spirit; they lament not that they are to die, but only the inglorious manner of it. This fully answers an objection that has been made both against Homer and Virgil, who have been blamed for describing their heroes with such an air of mean-spiritedness. Drowning was esteemed by the ancients an accursed death, as it deprived their bodies of the rites of sepulture; it is therefore no wonder that this kind of death was greatly dreaded, since it barred their entrance into the happy regions of the dead for many hundreds of years.

V. 397. (*Such as was that, when show'rs of jav'lin's fled
 From conqu'ring Troy around Achilles dead.*)

These words have relation to an action nowhere described in the *Iliad* or *Odyssey*. When Achilles was slain by the treachery of Paris, the Trojans made a sally to gain his body, but Ulysses carried it off upon his shoulders, while Ajax protected him with his shield. The war of Troy is not the subject of the *Iliad*, and therefore relates not the death of Achilles; but, as Longinus remarks, he inserts many

All Greece had paid me solemn fun'erals then,
And spread my glory with the sons of men. 400
A shameful fate now hides my hapless head,
Unwept, unnoted, and for ever dead!

A mighty wave rush'd o'er him as he spoke,
The raft it cover'd, and the mast it broke;
Swept from the deck, and from the rudder torn, 405
Far on the swelling surge the chief was borne:
While by the howling tempest rent in twain
Flew sail and sail-yards rattling o'er the main.
Long press'd, he heav'd beneath the weighty wave,
Clogg'd by the cumbrous vest Calypso gave: 410
At length emerging, from his nostrils wide
And gushing mouth, effus'd the briny tide,
Ev'n then not mindless of his last retreat,
He seiz'd the raft, and leap'd into his seat,
Strong with the fear of death. The rolling flood 415
Now here, now there, impell'd the floating wood.
As when a heap of gather'd thorns is cast
Now to, now fro, before th' autumnal blast;
Together clung, it rolls around the field;
So roll'd the float, and so its texture held: 420
And now the south, and now the north, bear sway,
And now the east the foamy floods obey,
And now the west-wind whirls it o'er the sea.

actions in the Odyssey which are the sequel of the story of the Iliad. This conduct has a very happy effect; he aggrandizes the character of Ulysses by these short histories, and has found out the way to make him praise himself. without vanity.

The wand'ring chief, with toils on toils opprest,
Leucothea saw, and pity touch'd her breast: 425
(Herself a mortal once, of Cadmus' strain,
But now an azure sister of the main)
Swift as a sea-mew springing from the flood,
All radiant on the raft the goddess stood:
Then thus address'd him. Thou, whom heav'n decrees
To Neptune's wrath, stern tyrant of the seas, 431
(Unequal contest;) not his rage and pow'r,
Great as he is, such virtue shall devour.
What I suggest thy wisdom will perform;
Forsake thy float, and leave it to the storm; 435
Strip off thy garments; Neptune's fury brave
With naked strength, and plunge into the wave.

V. 424. *The wand'ring chief, with toils on toils opprest,
Leucothea saw, and pity touch'd her breast.*]

It is not probable that Ulysses could escape so great a danger by his own strength alone; and therefore the poet introduces Leucothea to assist in his preservation. But it may be asked, if this is not contradictory to the command of Jupiter in the beginning of the book? Ulysses is there forbid all assistance either from men or gods; whence then is it that Leucothea preserves him? The former passage is to be understood to imply an interdiction only of all assistance, until Ulysses was shipwrecked; he was to suffer, not to die; thus Pallas afterwards calms the storm; she may be imagined to have a power over the winds, as she is the daughter of Jupiter, who denotes the air, according to the observation of Eustathius: here Leucothea is very properly introduced to preserve Ulysses; she is a sea-goddess, and had been a mortal, and therefore interests herself in the cause of a mortal.

To reach Phæacia all thy nerves extend,
 There fate decrees thy miseries shall end.
 This heav'nly scarf beneath thy bosom bind, 440
 And live; give all thy terrors to the wind.
 Soon as thy arms the happy shore shall gain,
 Return the gift, and cast it in the main;
 Observe my orders, and with heed obey,
 Cast it far off, and turn thy eyes away. 445

With that, her hand the sacred veil bestows,
 Then down the deeps she div'd from whence she rose;

. V. 440. *This heav'nly scarf beneath thy bosom bind.*] This passage may seem extraordinary, and the poet be thought to preserve Ulysses by incredible means. What virtue could there be in this scarf against the violence of storms? Eustathius very well answers this objection. It is evident that the belief of the power of amulets or charms prevailed in the times of Homer; thus moly is used by Ulysses as a preservative against fascination, and some charm may be supposed to be implied in the zone or cestus of Venus. Thus Ulysses may be imagined to have worn a scarf, or cincture, as a preservative against the perils of the sea. They consecrated anciently votiva, as tablets, &c. in the temples of their gods: so Ulysses, wearing a zone consecrated to Leucothea, may be said to receive it from the hands of that goddess. Eustathius observes, that Leucothea did not appear in the form of a bird, for then how should she speak, or how bring this cincture or scarf? The expression has relation only to the manner of her rising out of the sea, and descending into it; the action, not the person, is intended to be represented. Thus Minerva is said in the *Odyssey*, 'to fly away,' *ορνις ως αεττα*, not in the form, but with the swiftness of an eagle. Most of the translators have rendered this passage ridiculously; they describe her in the real form of a sea-fowl, though she speaks, and gives her scarf. So the version of Hobbs:

'She spoke, in figure of a water-hen.'

A moment snatch'd the shining form away,
And all was cover'd with the curling sea. 449

Struck with amaze, yet still to doubt inclin'd,
He stands suspended, and explores his mind.
What shall I do? Unhappy me! who knows
But other gods intend me other wocs?
Whoe'er thou art, I shall not blindly join
Thy pleaded reason, but consult with mine: 455
For scarce in ken appears that distant isle
Thy voice foretells me shall conclude my toil.
Thus then I judge; while yet the planks sustain
The wild waves fury, here I fix'd remain:

V. 454. — — — *I shall not blindly join*
Thy pleaded reason — — —]

Eustathius observes, that this passage is a lesson to instruct us, that second reflections are 'preferable to our first thoughts; and the poet maintains the character of Ulysses by describing him thus doubtful and cautious. But is not Ulysses too incredulous, who will not believe a goddess? and disobedient to her, by not committing himself to the seas? Leucothea does not confine Ulysses to an immediate compliance with her injunctions: she commands him to forsake the raft, but leaves the time to his own discretion: and Ulysses might very justly be somewhat incredulous, when he knew that Neptune was his enemy, and contriving his destruction. The doubts therefore of Ulysses are the doubts of a wise man: but then, is not Ulysses described with a greater degree of prudence than the goddess? She commands him to leave the raft, he chooses to make use of it till he arrives nearer the shores. Eustathius directly ascribes more wisdom to Ulysses than to Leucothea.' This may appear too partial; it is sufficient to observe, that the command of Leucothea was general, and left the manner of it to his own prudence.

But when their texture to the tempest yields, 460
I lanch advent'rous on the liquid fields,
Join to the help of gods the strength of man,
And take this method, since the best I can.

While thus his thoughts an anxious council hold,
The raging god a wat'ry mountain roll'd; 465
Like a black sheet the whelming billow spread,
Burst o'er the float, and thunder'd on his head.
Planks, beams, disparted fly: the scatter'd wood
Rolls diverse, and in fragments strows the flood.
So the rude Boreas, o'er the field new-shorn, 470
Tosses and drives the scatter'd heaps of corn.
And now a single beam the chief bestrides;
There, pois'd a while above the bounding tides,
His limbs discumbers of the clinging vest,
And binds the sacred cincture round his breast: 475
Then prone on ocean in a moment flung,
Stretch'd wide his eager arms, and shot the seas along.
All naked now, on heaving billows laid,
Stern Neptune ey'd him, and contemptuous said:

Go, learn'd in woes, and other woes essay! 480
Go, wander helpless on the wat'ry way:
Thus, thus find out the destin'd shore, and then
(If Jove ordains it) mix with happier men.
Whate'er thy fate, the ills our wrath could raise
Shall last remember'd in thy best of days. 485

This said, his sea-green steeds dividè the foam,
And reach high Ægæ and the tow'ry dome.

Now, scarce withdrawn the fierce earth-shaking
pow'r,
Jove's daughter Pallas watch'd the fav'ring hour,
Back to their caves she bade the winds to fly, 490
And hush'd the blust'ring brethren of the sky.
The drier blasts alone of Boreas sway,
And bear him soft on broken waves away;
With gentle force impelling to that shore,
Where fate has destin'd he shall toil no more. 495
And now two nights, and now two days were past,
Since wide he wander'd on the wat'ry waste;
Heav'd on the surge with intermitting breath,
And hourly panting in the arms of death.
The third fair morn now blaz'd upon the main; 500
Then glassy smooth lay all the liquid plain,
The winds were hush'd, the billows scarcely curl'd,
And a dead silence still'd the wat'ry world.
When lifted on a ridgy wave, he spies
The land at distance, and with sharpen'd eyes. 505

V. 496. *And now two nights, and now two days were past.*] It may be thought incredible that any person should be able to contend so long with a violent storm, and at last survive it: it is allowed that this could scarce be done by the natural strength of Ulysses; but the poet has softened the narration, by ascribing his preservation to the cincture of Leucothea. The poet likewise very judiciously removes Neptune, that Ulysses may not appear to be preserved against the power of that god; and to reconcile it entirely to credibility, he introduces Pallas, who calms the winds and composes the waves, to make way for his preservation.

As pious children joy with vast delight
 When a lov'd sire revives before their sight,
 (Who ling'ring long has call'd on death in vain,
 Fix'd by some dæmon to the bed of pain,

V. 506. *As pious children joy with vast delight.*] This is a very beautiful comparison, and well adapted to the occasion. We mistake the intention of it, as Eustathius observes, if we imagine that Homer intended to compare the person of Ulysses to these children: it is introduced solely to express the joy which he conceives at the sight of land: if we look upon it in any other view, the resemblance is lost; for the children suffer not themselves, but Ulysses is in the utmost distress. These images drawn from common life are particularly affecting; they have relation to every man, as every man may possibly be in such circumstances: other images may be more noble, and yet less pleasing: they may raise our admiration, but these engage our affections.

509. *Fix'd by some dæmon to the bed of pain.*] It was a prevailing opinion among the ancients, that the gods were the authors of all diseases incident to mankind. Hippocrates himself confesses that he had found some distempers, in which the hand of the gods was manifest, *Στοιχ τῆ, αἰ*, as Dacier observes. In this place this assertion has a peculiar beauty, it shews that the malady was not contracted by any vice of the father, but inflicted by an evil dæmon. Nothing is more evident, than that every person was supposed by the ancients to have a good and a bad dæmon attending him; what the Greeks called a dæmon, the Romans named a genius. I confess that this is no where directly affirmed in Homer, but, as Plutarch observes, it is plainly intimated. In the second book of the Iliad the word is used both in a good and bad sense; when Ulysses addresses himself to the generals of the army, he says *Δαιμονίε*, in the better sense; and immediately after he uses it to denote a coward,

Δαιμονί' ἀτρεμῆς ἦσο.

This is a strong evidence, that the notion of a good and bad dæmon was believed in the days of Homer.

Book V. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 243

Till heav'n by miracle his life restore) 510
So joys Ulysses at the appearing shore;
And sees (and labours onward as he sees)
The rising forests, and the tufted trees. :
And now, as near approaching as the sound
Of human voice the list'ning ear may wound, 515
Amidst the rocks he hears a hollow roar
Of murm'ring surges breaking on the shore :
Nor peaceful port was there, nor winding bay,
To shield the vessel from the rolling sea,
But cliffs, and shaggy shores, a dreadful sight! 520
All rough with rocks, with foamy billows white.
Fear seiz'd his slacken'd limbs and beating heart,
As thus he commun'd with his soul apart.
Ah me! when o'er a length of waters tost,
'These eyes at last behold th' unhop'd for coast, 525

V. 524. *Ah me! when o'er a length of waters tost.*] Ulysses in this place calls as it were a council in his own breast; considers his danger, and how to free himself from it. But it may be asked if it be probable that he should have leisure for such a consultation, in the time of such imminent danger? The answer is, that nothing could be more happily imagined, to exalt his character: he is drawn with a great presence of mind, in the most desperate circumstances: fear does not prevail over his reason: his wisdom dictates the means of his preservation; and his bravery of spirit supports him in the accomplishment of it.

The poet is also very judicious in the management of the speech: it is concise, and therefore proper to the occasion, there being no leisure for prolixity; every image is drawn from the situation of the place, and his present condition; he follows nature, and nature is the foundation of true poetry.

No port receives me from the angry main,
But the loud deeps demand me back again.
Above sharp rocks forbid access; around
Roar the wild waves; beneath, is sea profound!
No footing sure affords the faithless sand, 530
To stem too rapid, and too deep to stand.
If here I enter, my efforts are vain,
Dash'd on the cliffs, or heav'd into the main;
Or round the island if my course I bend,
Where the ports open, or the shores descend, 535
Back to the seas the rolling surge may sweep,
And bury all my hopes beneath the deep.
Or some enormous whale the god may send,
(For many such on Amphitrite attend)
Too well the turns of mortal chance I know, 540
And hate relentless of my heav'nly foe.

While thus he thought, a monstrous wave up-bore
The chief, and dash'd him on the craggy shore:
Torn was his skin, nor had the ribs been whole,
But instant Pallas enter'd in his soul. 545
Close to the cliff with both his hands he clung,
And stuck adherent, and suspended hung;
Till the huge surge roll'd off; then, backward sweep
The reflux tides, and plunge him in the deep.
As when the polypus, from forth his cave 550
Torn with full force, reluctant beats the wave;

V. 550. *As when the polypus.*] It is very surprising to see the prodigious variety with which Homer enlivens his poetry: he rises or

His ragged claws are stuck with stones and sands :
So the rough rock had shagg'd Ulysses' hands.
And now had perish'd, whelm'd beneath the main,
Th' unhappy man ; ev'n fate had been in vain :
But all-subduing Pallas lent her pow'r, 556
And prudence sav'd him in the needful hour.
Beyond the beating surge his course he bore,
(A wider circle, but in sight of shore)

falls as his subject leads him, and finds allusions proper to represent an hero in battle, or a person in calamity. We have here an instance of it; he compares Ulysses to a polypus; the similitude is suited to the element, and to the condition of the person. It is observable, that this is the only full description of a person shipwrecked in all his poems: he therefore gives a loose to his imagination, and enlarges upon it very copiously. There appears a surprising fertility of invention through the whole of it: in what a variety of attitudes is Ulysses drawn, during the storm, and at his escape from it? His soliloquies in the turns of his condition, while he is sometimes almost out of danger, and then again involved in new difficulties, engage our hopes and fears. He ennobles the whole by his machinery, and Neptune, Pallas, and Leucothea interest themselves in his safety or destruction. He has likewise chosen the most proper occasion for a copious description; there is leisure for it. The proposition of the poem requires him to describe a man of sufferings in the person of Ulysses: he therefore no sooner introduces him, but he throws him into the utmost calamities, and describes them largely, to shew at once the greatness of his distress, and his wisdom and patience under it. In what are the sufferings of Æneas in Virgil comparable to these of Ulysses? Æneas suffers little personally in comparison of Ulysses, his incidents have less variety, and consequently less beauty. Homer draws his images from nature, but embellishes those images with the utmost art, and fruitfulness of invention.

With longing eyes, observing, to survey 560
 Some smooth ascent, or safe-sequester'd bay.
 Between the parting rocks at length he spy'd
 A falling stream with gentler waters glide;
 Where to the seas the shelving shore declin'd,
 And form'd a bay, impervious to the wind. 565
 To this calm port the glad Ulysses press'd,
 And hail'd the river, and its god address'd.

Whoe'er thou art, before whose stream unknown
 I bend, a suppliant at thy wat'ry throne,
 Hear, azure king! nor let me fly in vain 570
 To thee from Neptune and the raging main.
 Heav'n hears and pities hapless men like me,
 For sacred ev'n to gods is misery:
 Let then thy waters give the weary rest,
 And save a suppliant, and a man distrest. 575

He pray'd, and straight the gentle stream subsides,
 Detains the rushing current of his tides,
 Before the wand'rer smooths the wat'ry way,
 And soft receives him from the rolling sea.

V. 573. *For sacred ev'n to gods is misery.*] This expression is bold, yet reconcileable to truth: Heaven in reality has regard to the misery and affliction of good men, and at last delivers them from it. 'Res est sacra miser,' as Dacier observes; and Seneca, in his Dissertation on Providence, speaks to this purpose, 'Ecce spectaculum dignum ad quod respiciat, intentus operi suo, Deus! Ecce par Deo dignum, vir fortis cum malâ fortunâ compositus!' Misery is not always a punishment, but sometimes a trial: this is agreeable to true theology.

That moment, fainting as he touch'd the shore, 580
 He dropp'd his sinewy arms: his knees no more
 Perform'd their office, or his weight upheld:
 His swol'n heart heav'd; his bloated body swell'd:
 From mouth and nose the briny torrent ran;
 And lost in lassitude lay all the man, 585
 Depriv'd of voice, of motion, and of breath;
 The soul scarce waking, in the arms of death.
 Soon as warm life its wonted office found,
 The mindful chief Leucothea's scarf unbound;

V. 578. *Before the wand'rer smooths the wat'ry way.*] Such passages as these are bold yet beautiful. Poetry animates every thing, and turns rivers into gods. But what occasion is there for the intervention of this river-god to smooth the waters, when Pallas had already composed both the seas and the storms? The words in the original solve the objection, *προσθε δε οι ποιησε γαληνην*; or, 'smoothed the way before him,' that is, his own current: the actions therefore are different; Pallas gives a general calmness to the sea, the river-god to his own current.

V. 581. *He dropp'd his sinewy arms: his knees no more Perform'd their office.*] •

Eustathius appears to me to give this passage a very forced interpretation; he imagines that the poet, by saying that Ulysses bent his knees and arms, spoke philosophically, and intended to express that he contracted his limbs, that had been fatigued with the long extension in swimming, by a voluntary remission; lest they should grow stiff, and lose their natural faculty. But this is an impossibility: how could this be done, when he is speechless, fainting, without pulse and respiration? Undoubtedly Homer, as Dacier observes, means by the expression of *εκαμψε γωνια και χειρας*, no more than that his limbs failed him, or he fainted. If the action was voluntary, it implies that he intended to refresh them, for *γονυ καμπτειν* is generally used in that sense by Homer; if involuntary, it signifies he fainted.

Observant of her word, he turn'd aside 590
His head, and cast it on the rolling tide.
Behind him far, upon the purple waves
The waters waft it, and the nymph receives.

Now parting from the stream, Ulysses found
A mossy bank with pliant rushes crown'd; 595
The bank he press'd, and gently kiss'd the ground;
Where on the flow'ry herb as soft he lay,
Thus to his soul the sage began to say.

What will ye next ordain, ye pow'rs on high!
And yet, ah yet, what fates are we to try? 600
Here by the stream, if I the night outwear,
Thus spent already, how shall nature bear
The dews descending, and nocturnal air;
Or chilly vapours, breathing from the flood
When morning rises?—If I take the wood, 605
And in thick shelter of innum'rous boughs
Enjoy the comfort gentle sleep allows;
Though fenc'd from cold, and though my toil be past,
What savage beasts may wander in the waste?
Perhaps I yet may fall a bloody prey 610
To prowling bears, or lions in the way.

Thus long debating in himself he stood:
At length he took the passage to the wood,
Whose shady horrors on a rising brow 614
Wav'd high, and frown'd upon the stream below.
There grew two olives, closest of the grove,
With roots entwin'd, and branches interwove;

Alike their leaves, but not alike they smil'd
 With sister-fruits; one fertile, one was wild.
 Nor here the sun's meridian rays had pow'r, 620
 Nor wind sharp piercing, nor the rushing show'r;
 The verdant arch so close its texture kept:
 Beneath this covert great Ulysses crept.
 Of gather'd leaves an ample bed he made, 624
 (Thick strown by tempest through the bow'ry shade)
 Where three at least might winter's cold defy,
 Though Boreas rag'd along th' inclement sky.
 This store, with joy the patient hero found,
 And sunk amidst 'em, heap'd the leaves around.
 As some poor peasant, fated to reside 630
 Remote from neighbours in a forest wide,

V. 630. *As some poor peasant, fated to reside*
Remote from neighbours.]

Homer is very happy in giving dignity to low images. What can be more unpromising than this comparison, and what more successfully executed? Ulysses, in whom remains as it were but a spark of life, the vital heat being extinguished by the shipwreck, is very justly compared to a brand, that retains only some small remains of fire; the leaves that cover Ulysses, are represented by the embers, and the preservation of the fire all night, paints the revival of his spirits by the repose of the night; the expression,

— — — 'Fated to reside
 Remote from neighbours,'

is not added in vain; it gives, as Eustathius further observes, an air of credibility to the allusion, as if it had really been drawn from some particular observation; a person that lives in a desert being obliged to such circumstantial cares, where it is impossible to have a supply, for

Studious to save what human wants require,
 In embers heap'd, preserves the seeds of fire:
 Hid in dry foliage thus Ulysses lies,
 Till Pallas pour'd soft slumbers on his eyes; 635
 And golden dreams (the gift of sweet repose)
 Lull'd all his cares, and banish'd all his woes.

want of neighbours, Homer literally calls these remains 'the seeds of fire;' Æschylus in his *Prometheus* calls a spark of fire *πυρρός πυρρῆς*, or, 'a fountain of fire;' less happily in my judgment, the ideas of fire and water being contradictory.

The Conclusion.] This book begins with the seventh day, and comprehends the space of twenty-five days; the first of which is taken up in the message of Mercury, and interview between Calypso and Ulysses; the four following in the building of the vessel; eighteen before the storm, and two after it. So that one and thirty days are completed, since the opening of the poem.

THE
SIXTH BOOK
OF THE
ODYSSEY.

THE ARGUMENT.

PALLAS appearing in a dream to Nausicaa (the daughter of Alcinous king of Phæacia) commands her to descend to the river, and wash the robes of state, in preparation to her nuptials. Nausicaa goes with her handmaids to the river; where, while the garments are spread on the bank, they divert themselves in sports. Their voices awake Ulysses, who addressing himself to the princess, is by her relieved and clothed, and receives directions in what manner to apply to the king and queen of the island.

Figure 1

WHILE thus the weary wand'rer sunk to rest,
And peaceful slumbers calm'd his anxious breast;
The martial maid from heav'n's aerial height
Swift to Phæacia wing'd her rapid flight,
In elder times the soft Phæacian train
In case possess'd the wide Hyperian plain;
Till the Cyclopean race in arms arose,
A lawless nation of gigantic foes;
Then great Nausithous from Hyperia far,
Through seas retreating from the sound of war,
The recreant nation to fair Scheria led,
Where never science rear'd her laurel'd head:

V. 12. *Where never science rear'd her laurel'd head.*] The Phæacians having a great share in the succeeding parts of the *Odyssey*, it may not be improper to enlarge upon their character. Homer has here described them very distinctly: he is to make use of the Phæacians to convey Ulysses to his country, he therefore by this short character, gives the reader such an image of them, that he is not surprised at their credulity and simplicity, in believing all those fabulous recitals which Ulysses makes in the progress of the poem. The place

There, round his tribes a strength of wall he rais'd;
 To heav'n the glitt'ring domes and temples blaz'd:
 Just to his realms, he parted grounds from grounds, 15
 And shar'd the lands, and gave the lands their bounds.

likewise in which he describes them is well chosen; it is before they enter upon action, and by this method we know what to expect from them, and see how every action is naturally suited to their character.

Bossu observes that the poet has inserted this verse with great judgment: Ulysses, says he, knew that the Phæacians were simple and credulous; and that they had all the qualities of a lazy people, who admire nothing so much as romantic adventures: he therefore pleases them by recitals suited to their own humour: but even here the poet is not unmindful of his more understanding readers; and the truth intended to be taught by way of moral is, that a soft and effeminate life breaks the spirit, and renders it incapable of manly sentiments or actions.

Plutarch seems to understand this verse in a different manner; he quotes it in his Dissertation upon Banishment, (to shew that Nausithous made his people happy though he left his own country, and settled them far from the commerce of mankind, *εκας ανδρων αλφεισταιων*,) without any particular view to the Phæacians; which was undoubtedly intended by Homer, those words being a kind of a preface to their general character.

This Phæacia of the ancients is the island now called Corfu. The inhabitants of it were a colony of the Hyperians: Eustathius remarks, that it has been a question whether Hyperia were a city or an island; he judges it to be a city: it was infested by the Cyclops; but they had no shipping, as appears from the ninth of the Odyssey, and consequently, if it had been an island, they could not have molested the Phæacians; he therefore concludes it to be a city, afterwards called Camarina in Sicily.

Mr. Barnes has here added a verse that is not to be found in any other edition; and I have rendered it in the translation.

Now in the silent grave the monarch lay,
And wise Alcinous held the regal sway.

To his high palace through the fields of air
The goddess shot; Ulysses was her care. 20
There as the night in silence roll'd away,
A heav'n of charms divine Nausicaa lay:
Through the thick gloom the shining portals blaze;
Two nymphs the portals guard, each nymph a grace.
Light as the viewless air, the warrior maid 25
Glides through the valves, and hovers round her head;
A fav'rite virgin's blooming form she took,
From Dymas sprung, and thus the vision spoke:

Oh indolent! to waste thy hours away!
And sleep'st thou careless of the bridal day? 30
Thy spousal ornament neglected lies;
Arise, prepare the bridal train, arise!

V. 24. *Two nymphs the portals guard, each nymph a grace.*] The poet, as Eustathius observes, celebrates the beauty of these two attending virgins to raise their characters, that they may not be esteemed common servants, or the poet thought extravagant, when he compares Nausicaa and her damsels to Diana and her nymphs.

The judgment with which he introduces the vision is remarkable: in the Iliad, when he is to give an air of importance to his vision, he clothes it in the likeness of Nestor, the wisest person of the army; a man of less consideration had been unsuitable to the greatness of the occasion, which was to persuade kings and heroes. Here the poet sends a vision to a young lady, under the resemblance of a young lady: he adapts the circumstances to the person, and describes the whole with an agreeable propriety. EUSTATHIUS.

A just applause the cares of dress impart,
And give soft transport to a parent's heart.

V. 31. *Thy spousal ornament neglected lies;*

Arise, prepare the bridal train —]

Here is a remarkable custom of antiquity. Eustathius observes, that it was usual for the bride to give changes of dress to the friends of the bridegroom at the celebration of the marriage, and Homer directly affirms it. Dacier quotes a passage in Judges concerning Samson's giving changes of garments at his marriage feast, as an instance of the like custom amongst the Israelites; but I believe, if there was such a custom at all amongst them, it is not evident from the passage alledged: nothing is plainer, than that Samson had not given the garments, if his riddle had not been expounded: nay, instead of giving, he himself had received them, if it had not been interpreted. I am rather of opinion that what is said of Samson, has relation to another custom amongst the ancients, of proposing an enigma at festivals, and adjudging a reward to him that solved it. These the Greeks called *γρίφοι συμπόλαι*; 'griphos convivales;' Athenæus has a long dissertation about this practice in his tenth book, and gives a number of instances of the enigmatical propositions in use at Athens, and of the forfeitures and rewards upon the solution and non-solution of them; and Eustathius in the tenth book of the Odyssey comes into the same opinion. So that if it was a custom amongst the Israelites as well as Greeks, to give garments (as it appears to be to give other gifts), this passage is no instance of it: it is indeed a proof that the Hebrews as well as Greeks had a custom of entertaining themselves at their festivals, with these 'griphi convivales:' I therefore believe that these changes of garments were no more than rewards or forfeits, according to the success of the interpretation.

V. 33. *A just applause the cares of dress impart.*] It is very probable that Quintilian had this verse in his view when he wrote 'Cultus magnificus addit hominibus, ut Græco versu testatum est, auctoritatem.' His words are almost a translation of it.

Εκ γὰρ τοι τῶν πατρὶς ἀνθρωπῆς ἀναβαίνει
Ἐσθλῇ.

Haste, to the limpid stream direct thy way, 35
 When the gay morn unveils her smiling ray:
 Haste to the stream! companion of thy care,
 Lo, I thy steps attend, thy labours share.

What I would chiefly observe, is, the propriety with which this commendation of dress is introduced; it is put into the mouth of a young lady (for so Pallas appears to be) to whose character it is suitable to delight in ornament. It likewise agrees very well with the description of the Phæacians, whose chief happiness consisted in dancing, dressing, singing, &c. Such a commendation of ornament would have been improper in the mouth of a philosopher, but beautiful when spoken by a young lady to Nausicaa.

V. 35. *Haste, to the limpid stream.*] This passage has not escaped the railery of the critics; Homer, say they, brings the goddess of wisdom down from heaven, only to advise Nausicaa to make haste to wash her clothes against her wedding: what necessity is there for a conduct so extraordinary upon so trivial an occasion? Eustathius sufficiently answers the objection, by observing that the poet very naturally brings about the safety of Ulysses by it; the action of the washing is the means, the protection of Ulysses the end of the descent of that goddess; so that she is not introduced lightly, or without contributing to an important action: and it must be allowed, that the means made use of are very natural; they grow out of the occasion, and at once give the fable a poetical turn, and an air of probability.

It has been further objected, that the poet gives an unworthy employment to Nausicaa, the daughter of a king; but such critics form their idea of ancient from modern greatness: it would be now a meanness to describe a person of quality thus employed, because custom has made it the work of persons of low condition: it would now be thought dishonourable for a lady of high station to attend the flocks; yet we find in the most ancient history extant, that the daughters of Laban and Jethro, persons of power and distinction, were so employed, without any dishonour to their quality. In short, these passages are to be looked upon as exact pictures of the old world, and consequently as valuable remains of antiquity.

Virgin, awake! the marriage hour is nigh,
 Sec! from their thrones thy kindred monarchs sigh!
 The royal car at early dawn obtain, 41
 And order mules obedient to the rein;
 For rough the way, and distant rolls the wave,
 Where their fair vests Phæacian virgins lave.
 In pomp ride forth; for pomp becomes the great, 45
 And majesty derives a grace from state.

Then to the palaces of heav'n she sails,
 Incumbent on the wings of wafting gales:

V. 41. *The royal car obtain.*] It would have been an impropriety to have rendered *αμαξαν* by the word chariot; Homer seems industriously to avoid *αρμα*, but constantly uses, *απηγη*, or *αμαξα*: this car was drawn by mules; whereas, observes Eustathius, the chariot, or *αρμα*, was proper only for horses. The word car takes in the idea of any other vehicle, as well as of a chariot.

This passage has undergone a very severe censure, as mean and ridiculous, chiefly from the expressions to her father afterwards, *υψηλην, ευκυκλον*: which being rendered, 'high, and round,' disgrace the author: no person, I believe, would ask a father to lend his high and round car; nor has Homer said it: Eustathius observes, that *ευκυκλον* is the same as *ευτροχος, κυκλα λεγονται οι τροχοι*, or wheels; and that *υπερπερια*, is *το επικειμενον τετραγωνον πλινθιον τω αξονι*, or the quadrangular body of the car that rests upon the axle of it; this fully answers the criticism: Nausicaa describes the car so particularly, to distinguish it from a chariot, which had been improper for her purpose: the other part of the objection, concerning the roundness of the car, is a mistake in the critic; the word having relation to the wheels, and not to the body of it, which, as Eustathius observes, was quadrangular.

V. 47. *Then to the palaces of heav'n she sails.*] Lucretius has copied this fine passage, and equalled, if not surpassed, the original.

The seat of gods; the regions mild of peace,
Full joy, and calm eternity of ease. 50

There no rude winds presume to shake the skies,
No rains descend, no snowy vapours rise;
But on immortal thrones the blest repose!
The firmament with living splendours glows.
Hither the goddess wing'd th' aerial way, 55
Through heav'n's eternal gates that blaz'd with day.

Now from her rosy car Aurora shed
The dawn, and all the orient flam'd with red.
Uprose the virgin with the morning light,
Obedient to the vision of the night. 60
The queen she sought: the queen her hours bestow'd
In curious works; the whirling spindle glow'd

‘ Apparet Divûm numen, sedesque quietæ,
Quas neque concutiunt venti, neque nubila nimbis
Aspergunt, neque nix acri concreta pruina
Cana cadens violat: semperque innubilis æther
Integit, et largè diffuso lumine ridet.’

The picture is the same in both authors, but the colouring, in my opinion, is less beautiful in Homer than Lucretius: the three last lines in particular are fuller of ornament, and the very verses have an air of the serenity they were intended to paint.

V. 61. — — — *the queen her hours bestow'd*
In curious works ———]

This is another image of ancient life: we see a queen amidst her attendants at work at the dawn of day, ‘ de nocte surrexit, et digiti ejus apprehenderant fusum.’ This is a practice as contrary to the manners of our ages, as the other of washing the robes: it is the more remarkable in this queen, because she lived amongst an idle effeminate people, that loved nothing but pleasures. Dacier.

With crimson threads, while busy damsels cull
 The snowy fleece, or twist the purpled wool.
 Meanwhile Phæacia's peers in council sat; 65
 From his high dome the king descends in state,
 Then with a filial awe the royal maid
 Approach'd him passing, and submissive said:

Will my dread sire his ear regardful deign,
 And may his child the royal car obtain? 70
 Say, with thy garments shall I bend my way,
 Where through the vales the mazy waters stray?
 A dignity of dress adorns the great,
 And kings draw lustre from the robe of state.
 Five sons thou hast; three wait the bridal day, 75
 And spotless robes become the young and gay:
 So when with praise amid the dance they shine,
 By these my cares adorn'd, that praise is mine.

Thus she: but blushes ill-restrain'd betray
 Her thoughts intentive on the bridal day: 80
 The conscious sire the dawning blush survey'd,
 And smiling thus bespoke the blooming maid.
 My child, my darling joy, the car receive;
 That, and whate'er our daughter asks, we give.

Swift at the royal nod th' attending train 85
 The car prepare, the mules incessant rein.
 The blooming virgin with dispatchful cares
 Tunics, and stoles, and robes imperial bears.

V. 88. *Tunics, and stoles, and robes imperial bears.*] It is not without reason that the poet describes Nausicaa carrying the whole

The queen, assiduous, to her train assigns
 The sumptuous viands, and the flav'rous wines. 90
 The train prepare a cruise of curious mould,
 A cruise of fragrance, form'd of burnish'd gold;
 Odour divine! whose soft refreshing streams
 Sleek the smooth skin, and scent the snowy limbs.

Now mounting the gay seat, the silken reins 95
 Shine in her hand: along the sounding plains

wardrobe of the family to the river: he inserts these circumstances so particularly, that she may be able to clothe Ulysses in the sequel of the story: he further observes the modesty and simplicity of those early times, when the whole dress of a king and his family (who reigned over a people that delighted in dress) is without gold: for we see Nausicaa carries with her all the habits that were used at the greatest solemnities; which had they been wrought with gold could not have been washed. EUSTATHIUS.

V. 95. *Now mounting the gay seat, &c.*] This image of Nausicaa riding in her car to the river, has exercised the pencils of excellent painters. Pausanias in his fifth book, which is the first of the Eliacks, speaks of a picture of two virgins drawn by mules, of which the one guides the reins, the other has her head covered with a veil: it is believed that it represents Nausicaa, the daughter of Alcinous, going with one of her virgins to the river. The words of Pausanias have caused some doubt with relation to the picture; he says, *ἐπὶ ἡμιονῶν*, or upon mules, but Homer describes her upon a car; how then can Nausicaa be intended by the painter? But Romulus Amasæus, who comments upon Pausanias, solves the difficulty, by observing that *ἐπὶ ἡμιονῶν* does not signify upon mules, but a car drawn by mules, by a figure frequent in all authors. Pliny is also thus to be understood in his thirty-fifth book; Protogenes the Rhodian painted at Athens, Paralus, and likewise Hemionida, who is said to represent Nausicaa; Hemionida is used (as Hermolaus Barbarus observes upon that passage) as a term of art to express a virgin riding upon, or, more properly, drawn by mules, or *ἐπὶ ἡμιονῶν*. SPONDANUS.

Swift fly the mules: nor rode the nymph alone;
 Around, a bevy of bright damsels shone.
 They seek the cisterns where Phæacian dames
 Wash their fair garments in the limpid streams; 100
 Where gathering into depth from falling rills,
 The lucid wave a spacious bason fills.

V. 101. *Where gathering into depth from falling rills,
 The lucid wave a spacious bason fills.]*

It is evident, that the ancients had basons, or cisterns, continually supplied by the rivers for this business of washing; they were called, observes Eustathius, *πλυνοί*, or *βοηφοί*; and were sometimes made of marble, other times of wood. Thus in the Iliad, book twenty-two,

‘ Each gushing fount a marble cistern fills,
 Whose polish’d bed receives the falling rills,
 Where Trojan dames, ere yet alarm’d by Greece,
 Wash’d their fair garments in the days of peace.’

The manner of washing was different from what is now in use: they trod them with their feet, *Στερίζον, ἐπιτέρον τοῖς ποσὶ*. EUSTATHIUS.

It may be thought that these customs are of small importance, and of little concern to the present ages: it is true; but time has stamped a value upon them: like ancient medals, their intrinsic worth may be small, but yet they are valuable, because images of antiquity.

Plutarch in his *Symposiacks* proposes this question, Why Nausicaa washes in the river, rather than the sea, though it was more nigh, more hot, and consequently more fit for the purpose than the river? Theon answers from Aristotle, that the sea-water has many gross, rough, and earthy particles in it, as appears from its saltness, whereas fresh water is more pure and unmixed, and consequently more subtle and penetrating, and fitter for use in washing. Themistocles dislikes this reason, and affirms that sea-water being more rough and earthy than that of rivers, is therefore the most proper, for its cleansing quality; this appears from observation, for in washing, ashes, or some such substance, are thrown into the fresh water to make it effectual,

The mules unharness'd range beside the main,
Or crop the verdant herbage of the plain.

Then emulous the royal robes they lave, 105
And plunge the vestures in the cleansing wave;
(The vestures cleans'd o'erspread the shelly sand,
Their snowy lustre whitens all the strand :)
Then with a short repast relieve their toil,
And o'er their limbs diffuse ambrosial oil; 110
And while the robes imbibe the solar ray,
O'er the green mead the sporting virgins play :
(Their shining veils unbound). Along the skies
Tost, and retost, the ball incessant flies.
They sport, they feast; Nausicaa lifts her voice, 115
And warbling sweet, makes earth and heav'n rejoice.
As when o'er Erymanth Diana roves,
Or wide Táygetus' resounding groves;

for those particles open the pores, and conduce to the effect of cleansing. The true reason then is, that there is an unctuous nature in sea-water (and Aristotle confesses all salt to be unctuous) which hinders it from cleansing: whereas river-water is pure, less mixed, and consequently more subtle and penetrating, and being free from all oily substance, is preferable and more effectual than sea-water.

V. 117. *As when o'er Erymanth Diana roves.*] This is a very beautiful comparison (and whenever I say any thing in commendation of Homer, I would always be understood to mean the original). Virgil was sensible of it, and inserted it in his poem.

'Qualis in Eurotæ ripis, aut per juga Cynthi,
Exercet Diana choros; quam mille secutæ
Hinc atque hinc glomerantur Oreades: illa pharetram
Fert humero, gradiensque deas supereminet omnes :
Latonæ tacitum pertentat gaudia pectus.'

A silvan train the huntress queen surrounds,
Her rattling quiver from her shoulder sounds: 120

It has given occasion for various criticisms, with relation to the beauty of the two authors. I will lay before the reader what is said in behalf of Homer in Aulus Gellius, and the answer by Scaliger.

Gellius writes, that it was the opinion of Valerius Probus, that no passage has been more unhappily copied by Virgil, than this comparison. Homer very beautifully compares Nausicaa, a virgin, sporting with her damsels in a solitary place, to Diana, a virgin goddess, taking her diversion in a forest, in hunting with her rural nymphs. Whereas Dido, a widow, is drawn by Virgil in the midst of a city, walking gravely with the Tyrian princes, ' *Instans operi, regnisque futuris*;' a circumstance that bears not the least resemblance to the sports of the goddess. Homer represents Diana with her quiver at her shoulder, but at the same time he describes her as an huntress: Virgil gives her a quiver, but mentions nothing of her as an huntress, and consequently lays a needless burthen upon her shoulder. Homer excellently paints the fulness of joy which Latona felt at the sight of her daughter, *γέγηθε δὲ τὲ φρονέα Ληΐω;* Virgil falls infinitely short of it in the word *pertentant*, which signifies a light joy that sinks not deep into the heart. Lastly, Virgil has omitted the strongest point and very flower of the comparison,

Ρεία δ' ἀρίνωτῃ πελέλαι, καλαὶ δὲ τὲ πασαι.

It is the last circumstance that completes the comparison, as it distinguishes Nausicaa from her attendants, for which very purpose the allusion was introduced.

Scaliger (who never deserts Virgil in any difficulty) answers, that the persons, not the places, are intended to be represented by both poets; otherwise, Homer himself is blameable, for Nausicaa is not sporting on a mountain but a plain, and has neither bow nor quiver like Diana. Neither is there any weight in the objection concerning the gravity of the gait of Dido; for neither is Nausicaa described in the act of hunting, but dancing: and as for the word *pertentant*, it is a metaphor taken from musicians and musical instruments: it denotes a strong degree of joy, *per* bears an intensive sense, and takes

Fierce in the sport, along the mountain's brow
 They bay the boar, or chase the bounding roe:
 High o'er the lawn, with more majestic pace,
 Above the nymphs she treads with stately grace;
 Distinguish'd excellence the goddess proves; 125
 Exults Latona, as the virgin moves.
 With equal grace Nausicaa trod the plain,
 And shone transcendent o'er the beauteous train.

Meantime (the care and fav'rite of the skies)
 Wrapt in embow'ring shade, Ulysses lies, 130
 His woes forgot! but Pallas now addrest
 To break the bands of all-composing rest.

in the perfection of joy. As to the quiver, it was an ensign of the goddess, as *Ἀψιφωροῦ* was of Apollo, and is applied to her upon all occasions indifferently, not only by Virgil, but more frequently by Homer. Lastly, *ῥαία δ' ἀψιφωρή*, &c. is superfluous; for the joy of Latona completes the whole, and Homer has already said *γέγηθε δὲ τὰ φρενὰ Ἀητώ*.

But still it must be allowed, that there is a greater correspondence to the subject intended to be illustrated, in Homer than in Virgil. Diana sports, so does Nausicaa; Diana is a virgin, so is Nausicaa: Diana is amongst her virgin nymphs, Nausicaa among her virgin attendants; whereas, in all these points, there is the greatest dissimilitude between Dido and Diana: and no one I believe, but Scaliger, can think the verse above quoted superfluous; which, indeed, is the beauty and perfection of the comparison. There may, perhaps, be a more rational objection made against this line in both poets.

'Latonaë tacitum pertentant gaudia pectus.'

This verse has no relation to the principal subject, the expectation is fully satisfied without it, and it alludes to nothing that either precedes or follows it, and consequently may be judged superfluous.

Forth from her snowy hand Nausicaa threw
The various ball; the ball erroneous flew,

V. 133. *Forth from her snowy hand Nausicaa threw
The various ball ———]*

This play with the ball was called *φεννις*, and *εφερινδα*, by the ancients, and from the signification of the word, which is *deception*, we may learn the nature of the play: the ball was thrown to some one of the players unexpectedly, and he as unexpectedly threw it to some other of the company to catch, from which surprise upon one another it took the name of *φεννις*. It was a sport much in use among the ancients, both men and women; it caused a variety of motions in throwing and running, and was therefore a very healthful exercise. The Lacedæmonians were remarkable for the use of it; Alexander the Great frequently exercised at it; and Sophocles wrote a play, called *Πλυγρίας*, or *Lotrices*; in which he represented Nausicaa sporting with her damsels at this play: it is not now extant.

Dionysidorus gives us a various reading; instead of *σφαιραν επειν'* *εφριψε*, he writes it, *παλλαν επειν'*, which the Latins render *πιλον*; and Suidas countenances the alteration, for he writes that a damsel named Larissa, as she sported at this play (*πιλω*, not *σφαιρη*) 'was drowned in the river Peneus. EUSTATHIUS.

What I would further observe is, the art of the poet in carrying on the story: he proceeds from incident to incident very naturally, and makes the sports of these virgins contribute to the principal design of the poem, and promote the re-establishment of Ulysses, by discovering him advantageously to the Phæacians. He so judiciously interweaves these sports into the texture of the story, that there would be a chasm if they were taken away; and the sports of the virgins are as much of a piece with the whole, as any of the labours of Ulysses.

The poet reaps a further advantage from this conduct: it beautifies and enlivens the poem with a pleasant and entertaining scene, and relieves the reader's mind by taking it off from a continual representation of horror and sufferings in the story of Ulysses: he himself seems here to take breath, and indulging his fancy, lets it run out into several beautiful comparisons, to prepare the reader to hear with

And swam the stream: loud shrieks the virgin train,
 And the loud shriek redoubles from the main. 136
 Wak'd by the shrilling sound, Ulysses' rose,
 And to the deaf woods wailing, breath'd his woes.

Ah me! on what inhospitable coast,
 On what new region is Ulysses tost: 140
 Possess'd by wild barbarians fierce in arms;
 Or men, whose bosom tender pity warms?
 What sounds are these that gather from the shores:
 The voice of nymphs that haunt the silvan bow'rs,

a better relish the long detail of the calamities of his hero, through the sequel of the *Odyssey*.

V. 139. *Ah me! on what inhospitable coast.*] This soliloquy is well adapted to the circumstances of Ulysses; and short, as is requisite in all soliloquies.

Virgil has imitated it, and Scaliger in general prefers the copy to the original:

‘ Ut primum lux alma data est, exire, locosque
 Explorare novos, quas vento accesserit oras:
 Qui teneant (nam inculta videt) hominesne, feræne,
 Quærere constituit’——

But it may perhaps be true, that Virgil here falls short of Homer: there is not that harmony of numbers, that variety of circumstances and sentiments in the Latin, as appears in the Greek poet: and above all, the whole passage has more force and energy by being put into the mouth of Ulysses, than when merely related by Virgil.

Dacier observes, that Abraham makes the very same reflections as Ulysses, upon his arrival at Gerar. ‘ Cogitavi mecum dicens, forsitan non est timor domini in loco isto.’ Gen. xx. 11. ‘ I thought, surely the fear of God is not in this place;’ which very well answers to καὶ σφίς γὰρ ἐστὶ θεοῦ.

The fair-hair'd Dryads of the shady wood; 145
 Or azure daughters of the silver flood;
 Or human voice? but, issuing from the shades,
 Why cease I straight to learn what sound invades?

Then, where the grove with leaves umbrageous bends,
 With forceful strength a branch the hero rends; 150
 Around his loins the verdant cincture spreads
 A wreathy foliage and concealing shades.

V. 151. *Around his loins the verdant cincture spreads
 A wreathy foliage and concealing shades.]*

This passage has given great offence to the critics. The interview between Ulysses and Nausicaa, says Rapin, outrages all the rules of decency: she forgets her modesty, and betrays her virtue, by giving too long an audience: she yields too much to his complaints, and indulges her curiosity too far at the sight of a person in such circumstances. But perhaps Rapin is too severe; Homer has guarded every circumstance with as much caution as if he had been aware of the objection: he covers his loins with a broad foliage (for Eustathius observes, that *πλορη* signifies *κλαδὶς πλατυς*, or a broad branch), he makes Ulysses speak at a proper distance, and introduces Minerva to encourage her virgin modesty. Is there here any outrage of decency? Besides, what takes off this objection of immodesty in Nausicaa, is, that the sight of a naked man was not unusual in those ages; it was customary for virgins of the highest quality to attend heroes to the bath, and even to assist in bathing them, without any breach of modesty; as is evident from the conduct of Polycaste in the conclusion of the third book of the Odyssey, who bathes and perfumes Telemachus. If this be true, the other objections of Rapin about her yielding too much to his complaints, &c. are of no weight; but so many testimonies of her virtuous and compassionate disposition, which induces her to pity and relieve calamity. Yet it may seem that the other damsels had a different opinion of this interview, and that through modesty they ran away, while Nausicaa alone talks with

As when a lion in the midnight hours,
Beat by rude blasts and wet with wintry show'rs,

Ulysses: but this only shews, not that she had less modesty, but more prudence, than her retinue. The damsels fled not out of modesty, but fear of an enemy: whereas Nausicaa wisely reflects that no such person could arrive there, the country being an island; and from his appearance, she rightly concluded him to be a man in calamity. This wisdom is the Pallas in the allegory, which makes her to stay when the other damsels fly for want of equal reflection. Adam and Eve covered themselves after the same manner as Ulysses.

V. 153. *As when a lion in the midnight hours.*] This is a very noble comparison, yet has not escaped censure: it has been objected that it is improper for the occasion, as bearing images of too much terror, only to fright a few timorous virgins, and that the poet is unseasonably sublime. This is only true in burlesque poetry, where the most noble images are frequently assembled to disgrace the subject, and to shew a ridiculous disproportion between the allusion and the principal subject; but the same reason will not hold in epic poetry, where the poet raises a low circumstance into dignity by a sublime comparison. The simile is not introduced merely to shew the impression it made upon the virgins, but paints Ulysses himself in very strong colours: Ulysses is fatigued with the tempests and waves; the lion with winds and storms: it is hunger that drives the lion upon his prey; an equal necessity compels Ulysses to go down to the virgins: the lion is described in all his terrors, Ulysses arms himself as going upon an unknown adventure; so that the comparison is very noble and very proper. This verse in particular has something horrible in the very run of it.

Σμερδαλεῖ δ' αὐτῇσι φανή κεκακωμένῳ ἀλμῇ.

Dionysius Halicarnassus in his observations upon the placing of words quotes it to this purpose: when Homer, says he, is to introduce a terrible or unusual image, he rejects the more flowing and harmonious vowels, and makes choice of such mutes and consonants as load the syllables, and render the pronunciation difficult.

Descends terrific from the mountain's brow: 155
 With living flames his rolling eye-balls glow;
 With conscious strength elate, he bends his way
 Majestically fierce, to seize his prey;
 (The steer or stag:) or with keen hunger bold
 Springs o'er the fence, and dissipates the fold. 160
 No less a terror, from the neighb'ring groves
 (Rough from the tossing surge) Ulysses moves;
 Urg'd on by want, and recent from the storms;
 The brackish ooze his manly grace deforms.
 Wide o'er the shore with many a piercing cry 165
 To rocks, to caves, the frightened virgins fly;
 All but the nymph: the nymph stood fix'd alone,
 By Pallas arm'd with boldness not her own.
 Meantime in dubious thought the king awaits,
 And self-considering, as he stands, debates; 170
 Distant his mournful story to declare,
 Or prostrate at her knee address the pray'r.
 But fearful to offend, by wisdom sway'd,
 At awful distance he accosts the maid.
 If from the skies a goddess, or if earth 175
 (Imperial virgin) boast thy glorious birth,

Pausanias writes in his Atticks, that the famous painter Polygnotus painted this subject in the gallery at Athens. *Εγραψε δε και προς τω ποταμω ταις ομς πλυνουσαις εφισταμενον Οδυσσεα*; he painted Ulysses approaching Nausicaa and her damsels, as they were washing at the river. This is the same Polygnotus who painted in the gallery called *ποικιλη*, the battle of Marathon gained by Miltiades over the Medes and Persians.

To thee I bend! if in that bright disguise
Thou visit earth, a daughter of the skies,

V. 175. *If from the skies a goddess, or if earth
(Imperial virgin) boast thy glorious birth,
To thee I bend!*

There never was a more agreeable and insinuating piece of flattery, than this address of Ulysses; and yet nothing mean appears in it, as is usual in almost all flattery. The only part that seems liable to any imputation, is that exaggeration at the beginning, of calling her a goddess; yet this is proposed with modesty and doubt, and hypothetically. Eustathius assigns two reasons why he resembles her to Diana, rather than to any other deity; either because he found her and her damsels in a solitary place, such as Diana is supposed to frequent with her rural nymphs; or perhaps Ulysses might have seen some statue or picture of that goddess, to which Nausicaa bore a likeness. Virgil (who has imitated this passage) is more bold, when without any doubt or hesitation, before he knew Venus, he pronounces the person with whom he talks, O Dea, certè.

Ovid has copied this passage in his *Metamorphosis*, book the fourth:

‘ — — — puer ò dignissime credi
Esse Deus! seu tu Deus es; potes esse Cupido:
Sive es mortalis; qui te genuere beati,
Et frater felix, et quæ dedit ubera nutrix!
Sed longe cunctis longeque potentior illa
Si qua tibi sponsa est, si quam dignabere tædâ!’

Scaliger prefers Virgil's imitation to Homer:

‘ O, quam te memorem, virgo! namque haud tibi vultus
Mortalis, nec vox hominem sonat. O Dea, certè!
An Phœbi soror, an Nympharum sanguinis una?’

See his reasons in the fifth book of his *Poetics*. But Scaliger brings a much heavier charge against Homer, as having stolen the verses from Musæus, and disgraced them by his alterations. The verses are as follow:

Hail, Dian, hail! the huntress of the groves
 So shines majestic, and so stately moves, 180
 So breathes an air divine! But if thy race
 Be mortal, and this earth thy native place,
 Bless'd is the father from whose loins you sprung,
 Bless'd is the mother at whose breast you hung,
 Bless'd are the brethren who thy blood divide, 185
 To such a miracle of charms ally'd:

Κυπρι φιλη μέλα κυπριν, Ἀθηναιη μελ' Ἀθηνην,
 Οὐ γὰρ ἐπιχθονήσιν ἴσῃν καλεῶ σε γυναιξίν.
 Ἀλλὰ σε θυγατέρεσσι Διὸς Κρονίων ἐῖσκω,
 Ὀλβίῳ ὅς σ' ἐφύτευσε, καὶ Ὀλβίῃ ἡ τέκε μητῆρ,
 Γαστήρ, ἣ σ' ἐλόχευσε, μακαράτατη.

Scaliger imagines this Musæus to be the same mentioned by Virgil in the Elysian fields,

‘ Musæum ante omnes,’ &c.

But I believe it is now agreed, that all the works of the ancient Musæus are perished, and that the person who wrote these verses lived many centuries after Homer, and consequently borrowed them from him. Scaliger calls them fine and lively in Musæus, but abject, unnervate, and unharmonious in Homer. But his prejudice against Homer is too apt to give a wrong bias to his judgment. Is the similitude of sound in ἦσιν ἴσῃν in the second verse of Musæus, harmonious? and is there not a tautology in the two last lines? ‘Happy is the mother that bore thee, and most happy the womb that brought thee forth;’ as if the happy person in the former line were not the same with the most happy in the latter! Whereas Homer still rises in his images, and ends with a compliment very agreeable to a beautiful woman,

‘ But bless'd o'er all, the youth with heav'nly charms,
 Who clasps the bright perfection in his arms!’

But this is submitted to the reader's better judgment.

Joyful they see applauding princes gaze,
When stately in the dance you swim th' harmonious
maze.

But bless'd o'er all, the youth with heav'nly charms,
Who clasps the bright perfection in his arms! 190
Never, I never view'd till this bless'd hour
Such finish'd grace! I gaze and I adore!
Thus seems the palm with stately honours crown'd
By Phœbus' altars; thus o'erlooks the ground;

V. 187. *Joyful they see applauding princes gaze.*] In the original there is a false construction, for after σφισι θυμός ιαίνεται, Ulysses uses λευσσόντων, whereas it ought to be λευσσει; but this disorder is not without its effect, it represents the modest confusion with which he addresses Nausicaa; he is struck with a religious awe at the sight of her (for so σεβας properly signifies), and consequently naturally falls into a confusion of expression; this is not a negligence, but a beauty. EUSTATHIUS.

V. 193. *Thus seems the palm.*] This allusion is introduced to image the stateliness, and exactness of shape in Nausicaa, to the mind of the reader; and so Tully, as Spondanus observes, understands it. Cicero, 1. de legibus. 'Aut quod Homericus Ulysses Deli se proceram et teneram palmam vidiisse dixit, hodie monstrant eandem.' Pliny also mentions this palm, lib. xiv. cap. 44. 'Necnon palma Deli ab ejusdem Dei ætate conspicitur.' The story of the palm is this: 'When Latona was in travail of Apollo in Delos, the earth that instant produced a large palm, against which she rested in her labour.' Homer mentions it in his Hymns.

Κεκλιμένη —————

Αἰχόλατῳ φοινίκῳ.

And also Callimachus.

Λυσάλο δὲ ζωνήν, ἀπὸ δ' ἐκλιθῇ ἐμπαλιν ὤμοσις
Φοινικῳ πῶτι πρεμνόν. And again,

The pride of Delos. (By the Delian coast, 195
 I voyag'd, leader of a warrior-host,
 But ah how chang'd! from thence my sorrow flows;
 O fatal voyage, source of all my woes!)

— — — ἐπικνευσεν ὁ Δηλίους αὐτὸν τὴ φοινίξ
 Ἐξαπνίης.

This allusion is after the Oriental manner. Thus in the Psalms, how frequently are persons compared to cedars? And in the same author, children are resembled to olive-branches.

This palm was much celebrated by the ancients; the superstition of the age had given it a religious veneration, and even in the times of Tully the natives esteemed it immortal; (for so the above-mentioned words imply.) This gives weight and beauty to the address of Ulysses; and it could not but be very acceptable to a young lady, to hear herself compared to the greatest wonder in the creation.

Dionysius Halicarnassus observes the particular beauty of these two verses.

Δηλῷ δὴπότε τοιοῦν Ἀπολλωνῷ παρὰ βωμῷ,
 Φοινικῷ νέον ἐρῶν ἀνερχόμενον εὐοήσα.

When Homer, says he, would paint an elegance of beauty, or represent any agreeable object, he makes use of the smoothest vowels and most flowing semivowels, as in the lines last recited: he rejects harsh sounds, and a collision of rough words; but the lines flow along with a smooth harmony of letters and syllables, without any offence to the ear by asperity of sound.

V. 198. *O fatal voyage, source of all my woes!*] There is some obscurity in this passage: Ulysses speaks in general, and does not specify what voyage he means. It may therefore be asked how is it to be understood? Eustathius answers, that the voyage of the Greeks to the Trojan expedition is intended by the poet; for Lycophron writes, that the Greeks sailed by Delos in their passage to Troy.

Homer passes over the voyage in this transient manner without a further explanation: Ulysses had no leisure to enlarge upon that story, but reserves it more advantageously for a future discovery be-

Raptur'd I stood, and as this hour amaz'd,
 With rev'rence at the lofty wonder gaz'd: 200
 Raptur'd I stand! for earth ne'er knew to bear
 A plant so stately, or a nymph so fair.
 Aw'd from access, I lift my suppliant hands;
 For misery, oh queen, before thee stands!
 Twice ten tempestuous nights I roll'd, resign'd 205
 To roaring billows, and the warring wind;
 Heav'n bade the deep to spare! but heav'n, my foe,
 Spares only to inflict some mightier woe!
 Inur'd to cares, to death in all its forms;
 Outcast I rove, familiar with the storms! 210
 Once more I view the face of human kind:
 Oh let soft pity touch thy gen'rous mind!
 Unconscious of what air I breathe, I stand
 Naked, defenceless on a foreign land.
 Propitious to my wants, a vest supply 215
 To guard the wretched from th' inclement sky:
 So may the gods who heav'n and earth controul,
 Crown the chaste wishes of thy virtuous soul,
 On thy soft hours their choicest blessings shed;
 Bless'd with a husband be thy bridal bed; 220
 Bless'd be thy husband with a blooming race,
 And lasting union crown your blissful days.

fore Alcinous and the Phæacian rulers. By this conduct he avoids a repetition, which must have been tedious to the reader, who would have found little appetite afterwards, if he had already been satisfied by a full discovery made to Nausicaa. The obscurity therefore arises from choice, not want of judgment.

The gods, when they supremely bless, bestow
Firm union on their favourites below:

Then envy grieves, with inly-pining hate; 225
The good exult, and heav'n is in our state.

To whom the nymph: O stranger, cease thy care.
Wise is thy soul, but man is born to bear:
Jove weighs affairs of earth in dubious scales,
And the good suffers, while the bad prevails: 230

V. 229. *Jove weighs affairs of earth in dubious scales,
And the good suffers, while the bad prevails.]*

The morality of this passage is excellent, and very well adapted to the present occasion. Ulysses had said,

'Heav'n bade the deep to spare! but heav'n, my foe,
Spares only to inflict some mightier woe.'

Nausicaa makes use of this expression to pay her address to Ulysses, and at the same time teaches conformable to truth, that the afflicted are not always the objects of divine hate; the gods (adds she) bestow good and evil indifferently, and therefore we must not judge of men from their conditions, for good men are frequently wretched, and bad men happy. Nay sometimes affliction distinguishes a man of goodness, when he bears it with a greatness of spirit. Sophocles puts a very beautiful expression into the mouth of Œdipus, καλλὸς κακῶν, the 'beauty and ornament of calamities.' EUSTATHIUS.

Longinus is of opinion, that when great poets and writers sink in their vigour, and cannot reach the pathetic, they descend to the moral. Hence he judges the Odyssey to be the work of Homer's declining years, and gives that as a reason of its morality: he speaks not this out of derogation to Homer, for he compares him to the sun, which, though it has not the same warmth as when in the meridian, is always of the same bigness: this is no dishonour to the Odyssey; the most useful, if not the most beautiful circumstance is allowed it, I mean instruction: in the Odyssey Homer appears to be the better man, in the Iliad the better poet.

Bear, with a soul resign'd, the will of Jove;
 Who breathes, must mourn : thy woes are from above.
 But since thou tread'st our hospitable shore,
 'Tis mine to bid the wretched grieve no more,
 To clothe the naked, and thy way to guide— 235
 Know, the Phæacian tribes this land divide;
 From great Alcinous' royal loins I spring,
 A happy nation, and a happy king.

Then to her maids—Why, why, ye coward train,
 These fears, this flight? ye fear, and fly in vain. 240
 Dread ye a foe? dismiss that idle dread,
 'Tis death with hostile step these shores to tread :
 Safe in the love of heav'n, an ocean flows
 Around our realm, a barrier from the foes ;

V. 242. *'Tis death with hostile step these shores to tread.*] This I take to be the meaning of the word *διεπος*, which Eustathius explains by *ζων και ερρωμενος*, 'vivid et valens;' or, 'he shall not be long-lived.' But it may be asked how this character of valour in destroying their enemies can agree with the Phæacians, an effeminate unwarlike nation? Eustathius answers, that the protection of the gods is the best defence, and upon this Nausicaa relies. But then it is necessary that man should co-operate with the gods; for it is in vain to rely upon the gods for safety, if we ourselves make not use of means proper for it: whereas the Phæacians were a people wholly given up to luxury and pleasures. The true reason then of Nausicaa's praise of the Phæacians may perhaps be drawn from that honourable partiality, and innate love which every person feels for his country. She knew no people greater than the Phæacians, and having ever lived in full security from enemies, she concludes that it is not in the power of enemies to disturb that security.

'Tis ours this son of sorrow to relieve, 245
 Cheer the sad heart, nor let affliction grieve.
 By Jove the stranger and the poor are sent,
 And what to those we give, to Jove is lent.
 Then food supply, and bathe his fainting limbs
 Where waving shades obscure the mazy streams.

Obedient to the call, the chief they guide 251
 To the calm current of the secret tide;
 Close by the stream a royal dress they lay,
 A vest and robe, with rich embroid'ry gay:
 Then unguents in a vase of gold supply, 255
 That breath'd a fragrance through the balmy sky.

To them the king. No longer I detain
 Your friendly care: retire, ye virgin train!
 Retire, while from my weary'd limbs I lave
 The foul pollution of the briny wave: 260
 Ye gods! since this worn frame refection knew,
 What scenes have I survey'd of dreadful view?

V. 247. *By Jove the stranger and the poor are sent,
 And what to those we give, to Jove is lent.*]

This is a very remarkable passage, full of such a pious generosity as the wisest teach, and the best practise. I am sensible it may be understood two ways; and in both it bears an excellent instruction. The words are, 'the poor and stranger are from Jove, and a small gift is acceptable to them, or acceptable to Jupiter,' Διὶ φίλῃ. I have chosen the latter, in conformity to the eastern way of thinking: 'He that hath pity on the poor lendeth unto the Lord,' as it is expressed in the Proverbs,

But, nymphs, recede! sage chastity denies
To raise the blush, or pain the modest eyes.

The nymphs withdrawn, at once into the tide 265
Active he bounds; the flashing waves divide:

V. 263. *But, nymphs, recede! &c.*] This place seems contradictory to the practice of antiquity, and other passages in the Odyssey: nothing is more frequent than for heroes to make use of the ministry of damsels in bathing, as appears from Polycaete and Telemachus, &c. Whence is it then that Ulysses commands the attendants of Nausicaa to withdraw while he bathes? Spondanus is of opinion, that the poet intended to condemn an indecent custom of those ages solemnly by the mouth of so wise a person as Ulysses: but there is no other instance in all his works to confirm that conjecture. I am at a loss to give a better reason, unless the difference of the places might make an alteration in the action. It is possible that in baths prepared for public use, there might be some convenience to defend the person who bathed in some degree from observation, which might be wanting in an open river, so that the action might be more indecent in the one instance than in the other, and consequently occasion these words of Ulysses: but this is a conjecture, and submitted as such to the reader's better judgment.

V. 265. — — — — *at once into the tide*
Active he bounds ————]

It may be asked why Ulysses prefers the river waters in washing, to the waters of the sea, in the Odyssey; whereas in the tenth book of the Iliad, after the death of Dolon, Diomed and Ulysses prefer the sea waters to those of the river? There is a different reason for this different regimen: in the Iliad, Ulysses was fatigued, and sweated with the labours of the night, and in such a case the sea waters being more rough are more purifying and corroborating: but here Ulysses comes from the seas, and (as Plutarch in his Symposiacks observes upon this passage) the more subtle and light particles exhale by the heat of the sun, but the rough and the saline stick to the body, till washed away by fresh waters.

O'er all his limbs his hands the wave diffuse,
 And from his locks compress the weedy ooze;
 The balmy oil, a fragrant show'r, he sheds;
 Then, dress'd, in pomp magnificently treads. 270
 The warrior goddess gives his frame to shine
 With majesty enlarg'd, and air divine :

V. 271. *The warrior goddess gives his frame to shine.*] Poetry delights in the marvellous, and ennobles the most ordinary subjects by dressing them with poetical ornaments, and giving them an adventitious dignity. The foundation of this fiction, of Ulysses receiving beauty from Pallas, is only this: the shipwreck and sufferings of Ulysses had changed his face and features, and his long fasting given him a pale and sorrowful aspect; but being bathed, perfumed, and dressed in robes, he appears another man, full of life and beauty. This sudden change gave Homer the hint to improve it into a miracle; and he ascribes it to Minerva, to give a dignity to his poetry. He further embellishes the description by a very happy comparison. Virgil has imitated it.

' Os humerosque Deo similis; namque ipsa decoram
 Cæsariem nato genetrix, lumenque juventæ
 Purpureum, et lætos oculis afflârat honores.
 Quale manus addunt ebori decus, aut ubi flavo
 Argentum Pariusve lapis circumdatur auro.'

Scaliger, in the fifth book of his Poetics, prefers Virgil before Homer; and perhaps his opinion is just: 'Manus' he says is more elegant than 'vir;' and 'addunt ebori decus,' than *χαριεῖν δὲ ἐρῶν τέλει*. 'Os humerosque Deo similis,' carries a nobler idea than Homer's *μειζονα καὶ πασσονα*; and above all,

' — — — Lumenque juventæ
 Purpureum, et lætos oculis afflârat honores,'

is inexpressibly beautiful.

It is said that this image is made by the assistance of Vulcan and Minerva: why by two deities? Eustathius answers, the first rudiments

Back from his brows a length of hair unfurls,
 His hyacinthine locks descend in wavy curls.
 As by some artist to whom Vulcan gives 275
 His skill divine, a breathing statue lives;
 By Pallas taught, he frames the wond'rous mould,
 And o'er the silver pours the fusil gold.
 So Pallas his heroic frame improves
 With heav'nly bloom, and like a god he moves. 280
 A fragrance breathes around: majestic grace
 Attends his steps: th' astonish'd virgins gaze.
 Soft he reclines along the murm'ring seas,
 Inhaling freshness from the fanning breeze.

The wond'ring nymph his glorious port survey'd,
 And to her damsels, with amazement, said, 286

Not without care divine the stranger treads
 This land of joy: his steps some godhead leads:
 Would Jove destroy him, sure he had been driv'n
 Far from this realm, the fav'rite isle of heav'n. 290

and formation of it in the fire is proper to Vulcan, and Minerva is the president of arts; Minerva gives the artificer wisdom in designing, and Vulcan skill in labouring and finishing the work.

V. 283. *He reclines along the murm'ring seas.*] This little circumstance, Eustathius observes, is not without its effect; the poet withdraws Ulysses, to give Nausicaa an opportunity to speak freely in his praise without a breach of modesty: she speaks apart to her damsels, and by this conduct, Ulysses neither hears his own commendation, which is a pain to all worthy spirits, nor does Nausicaa betray an indecent sensibility, because she speaks only to her own sex and attendants.

Late a sad spectacle of woe, he trod
 The desert sands, and now he looks a god.
 Oh heav'n ! in my conjubial hour decree
 This man my spouse, or such a spouse as he !
 But haste, the viands and the bowl provide— 295
 The maids the viands, and the bowl supply'd:
 Eager he fed, for keen his hunger rag'd,
 And with the gen'rous vintage thirst assuag'd.

Now on return her care Nausicaa bends,
 The robes resumes, the glitt'ring car ascends, 300

V. 293. *Oh heav'n ! in my conjubial hour decree
 This man my spouse, or such a spouse as he !]*

This passage has been censured as an outrage against modesty and credibility; is it probable that a young princess should fall in love with a stranger at first sight? and if she really falls in love, is it not an indecent passion? I will lay before the reader the observations of Plutarch upon it. ' If Nausicaa, upon casting her eyes upon this stranger, and feeling such a passion for him as Calypso felt, talks thus out of wantonness, her conduct is blameable: but if, perceiving his wisdom by his prudent address, she wishes for such an husband, rather than a person of her own country who had no better qualifications than singing, dancing, and dressing, she is to be commended.' This discovers no weakness, but prudence, and a true judgment. She deserves to be imitated by the fair sex, who ought to prefer a good understanding before a fine coat, and a man of worth before a good dancer.

Besides, it may be offered in vindication of Nausicaa, that she had in the morning been assured by a vision from heaven, that her nuptials were at hand; this might induce her to believe that Ulysses was the person intended by the vision for her husband; and his good sense and prudent behaviour, as Dacier observes, might make her wish it, without any imputation of immodesty.

Far blooming o'er the field: and as she press'd
The splendid seat, the list'ning chief address'd.

Stranger, arise! the sun rolls down the day,
Lo, to the palace I direct thy way:
Where in high state the nobles of the land 305
Attend my royal sire, a radiant band.
But hear, though wisdom in thy soul presides,
Speaks from thy tongue, and ev'ry action guides;
Advance at distance, while I pass the plain
Where o'er the furrows waves the golden grain: 310
Alone I reascend—With airy mounds
A strength of wall the guarded city bounds:
The jutting land two ample bays divides;
Full through the narrow mouths descend the tides:
The spacious basons arching rocks enclose, 315
A sure defence from ev'ry storm that blows.
Close to the bay great Neptune's fane adjoins;
And near, a forum flank'd with marble shines,
Where the bold youth, the num'rous fleets to store,
Shape the broad sail, or smooth the taper oar: 320

V. 313. *The jutting land two ample bays divides;
Full through the narrow mouths descend the tides.]*

This passage is not without its difficulty: but the scholiast upon Dionysius Periegetes gives us a full explication of it. Δυο λιμενας εχει η φαιακίς, ταν μιν Αλκίνοος, τον δε Τυλλε, διο θησι Καλλιμαχος αμφιδυμος φαιαξ. The island of Phæacia has two ports, the one called the port of Alcinous, the other of Hyllus; thus Callimachus calls it the place of two ports. And Apollonius, for the same reason, calls it αμφιλαβης, or the place which is entered by two ports. DACIER.

For not the bow they bend, nor boast the skill
To give the feather'd arrow wings to kill;
But the tall mast above the vessel rear,
Or teach the flutt'ring sail to float in air.
They rush into the deep with eager joy, 325
Climb the steep surge, and through the tempest fly;

V. 325. *They rush into the deep with eager joy.*] It is very judicious in the poet to let us thus fully into the character of the Phæacians, before he comes to shew what relation they have to the story of the Odyssey: he describes Alcinous and the people of better rank as persons of great hospitality and humanity; this gives an air of probability to the free and benevolent reception which Ulysses found: he describes the vulgar as excellent navigators; and he does this, not only because they are islanders, but, as Eustathius observes, to prepare the way for the return of Ulysses, who was to be restored by their conduct to his country, even against the inclination of Neptune, the god of the ocean. But it may be asked, is not Homer inconsistent with himself, when he paints the Phæacians as men of the utmost humanity, and immediately after calls them a proud unpolished race, and given up to censoriousness? It is easy to reconcile the seeming contradiction, by applying the character of humanity to the higher rank of the nation, and the other to the vulgar and the mariners. I believe the same character holds good to this day amongst any people who are much addicted to sea affairs; they contract a roughness, by being secluded from the more general converse of mankind, and consequently are strangers to that affability which is the effect of a more enlarged conversation. But what is it that inclines the Phæacians to be censorious? It is to be remembered, that they are every where described as a people abandoned to idleness; to idleness therefore that part of their character is to be imputed. When the thoughts are not employed upon things, it is usual to turn them upon persons: a good man has not the inclination, an industrious man not the leisure, to be censorious; so that censure is the property of idleness. This I take to be the moral intended to be drawn from the character of the Phæacians.

A proud, unpolish'd race—To me belongs
 The care to shun the blast of sland'rous tongues;
 Lest malice, prone the virtuous to defame,
 Thus with vile censure taint my spotless name. 330

‘What stranger this, whom thus Nausicaa leads?
 Heav'n's! with what graceful majesty he treads?
 Perhaps a native of some distant shore,
 The future consort of her bridal hour;
 Or rather, some descendant of the skies; 335
 Won by her pray'r, th' aerial bridegroom flies.
 Heav'n on that hour its choicest influence shed,
 That gave a foreign spouse to crown her bed!

V. 331. *What stranger this, whom thus Nausicaa leads?*] This is an instance of the great art of Homer, in saying every thing properly. Nausicaa had conceived a great esteem for Ulysses, and she had an inclination to let him know it; but modesty forbid her to reveal it openly: how then shall Ulysses know the value she has for his person, consistently with the modesty of Nausicaa? Homer with great address puts her compliments into the mouth of the Phæacians, and by this method she speaks her own sentiments, as the sentiments of the Phæacians: Nausicaa, as it were, is withdrawn, and a whole nation introduced for a more general praise of Ulysses.

V. 335. *Or rather, some descendant of the skies.*] Eustathius remarks, that the compliments of Nausicaa answer the compliments made to her by Ulysses: he resembled her to Diana, she him to the gods. But it may be asked, are not both these extravagancies? and is it not beyond all credibility that Nausicaa should be thought a goddess, or Ulysses a god? In these ages it would be judged extravagant, but it is to be remembered that in the days of Homer every grove, river, fountain, and oak tree, were thought to have their peculiar deities; this makes such relations as these more reconcilable, if not to truth, at least to the opinions of antiquity, which is sufficient for poetry.

All, all the godlike worthies that adorn
This realm, she flies: Phæacia is her scorn.' 340

And just the blame: for female innocence
Not only flies the guilt, but shuns th' offence:
Th' unguarded virgin, as unchaste, I blame;
And the least freedom with the sex is shame,
Till our consenting sires a spouse provide, 345
And public nuptials justify the bride.

V. 344. — *the least freedom with the sex is shame,
Till our consenting sires a spouse provide.]*

This is an admirable picture of ancient female life among the Orientals; the virgins were very retired, and never appeared amongst men but upon extraordinary occasions, and then always in the presence of the father or mother: but when they were married, says Eustathius, they had more liberty. Thus Helen converses freely with Telemachus and Pisistratus, and Penelope sometimes with the suitors. Nausicaa delivers her judgment sententiously, to give it more weight; what can be more modest than these expressions? and yet they have been greatly traduced by Mons. Perrault, a French critic; he translates the passage so as to imply that 'Nausicaa disapproves of a virgin's lying with a man, without the permission of her father, before marriage;' *ανδρασι μιαινεσθαι* led him into this mistake, which is sometimes used in such a signification, but here it only means conversation: if the word *μιαινεσθαι* signified more than keeping company, it would be more ridiculous, as Boileau observes upon Longinus, than Perrault makes it: for it is joined to *ανδρασι*, and then it would infer that Nausicaa disapproves of a young woman's lying with 'several men' before she was married, without the licence of her father. The passage, continues Boileau, is full of honour and decency: Nausicaa has a design to introduce Ulysses to her father; she tells him she goes before to prepare the way for his reception, but that she must not be seen to enter the city in his company, for fear of giving offence, which a modest woman ought not to give: a virtuous woman is obliged not

But wouldst thou soon review thy native plain?
 Attend, and speedy thou shalt pass the main:
 Nigh where a grove with verdant poplars crown'd,
 To Pallas sacred, shades the holy ground, 350
 We bend our way: a bubbling fount distills
 A lucid lake, and thence descends in rills;
 Around the grove a mead with lively green
 Falls by degrees, and forms a beauteous scene;
 Here a rich juice the royal vineyard pours; 355
 And there the garden yields a waste of flow'rs.
 Hence lies the town, as far as to the ear
 Floats a strong shout along the waves of air.

only to avoid immodesty, but the appearance of it; and for her part she could not approve of a young woman keeping company with men without the permission of her father or mother, before she was married. Thus the indecency is not in Homer, but in the critic: it is indeed, in Homer, an excellent lecture of modesty and morality.

V. 347. *But wouldst thou soon review thy native plain?*] Eustathius and Dacier are both of opinion, that Nausicaa had conceived a passion for Ulysses: I think this passage is an evidence that she rather admired and esteemed, than loved him; for it is contrary to the nature of the passion to give directions for the departure of the person beloved, but rather to invent excuses to prolong his stay. It is true Nausicaa had wished, in the foregoing parts of this book, that she might have Ulysses for her husband, or such an husband as Ulysses: but this only shews that she admired his accomplishments; nor could she have added 'such a spouse as he,' at all, if her affections had been engaged and fixed upon Ulysses only. This likewise takes off the objection of a too great fondness in Nausicaa; for it might have appeared too great a fondness to have fallen in love at the first with an absolute stranger.

There wait embow'r'd, while I ascend alone
To great Alcinous on his royal throne, 360
Arriv'd, advance impatient of delay,
And to the lofty palace bend thy way:
The lofty palace overlooks the town,
From ev'ry dome by pomp superior known;
A child may point the way. With earnest gait 365
Seek thou the queen along the rooms of state;
Her royal hand a wond'rous work designs,
Around a circle of bright damsels shines,
Part twist the threads, and part the wool dispose,
While with the purple orb the spindle glows. 370
High on a throne, amid the Scherian pow'rs,
My royal father shares the genial hours;
But to the queen thy mournful tale disclose,
With the prevailing eloquence of woes:
So shalt thou view with joy thy natal shore, 375
Though mountains rise between, and oceans roar.
She added not, but waving as she wheel'd
The silver scourge, it glitter'd o'er the field:
With skill the virgin guides th' embroider'd rein,
Slow rolls the car before th' attending train. 380

V. 373. *But to the queen thy mournful tale disclose.*] This little circumstance, seemingly of small importance, is not without its beauty. It is natural for a daughter to apply to the mother, rather than the father: women are likewise generally of a compassionate nature, and therefore the poet first interests the queen in the cause of Ulysses. At the same time he gives a pattern of conjugal affection, in the union between Arete and Alcinous.

Now whirling down the heav'ns, the golden day
 Shot through the western clouds a dewy ray;
 The grove they reach, where from the sacred shade
 To Pallas thus the pensive hero pray'd. 384

Daughter of Jove! whose arms in thunder wield
 Th' avenging bolt, and shake the dreadful shield;
 Forsook by thee, in vain I sought thy aid
 When booming billows clos'd above my head:
 Attend, unconquer'd maid! accord my vows,
 Bid the great hear, and pitying heal my woes. 390

This heard Minerva, but forbore to fly
 (By Neptune aw'd) apparent from the sky:

V. 391. — — — — *but forbore to fly*
(By Neptune aw'd) apparent from the sky.]

- . We see the ancients held a subordination among the deities, and though different in inclinations, yet they act in harmony: one god resists not another deity. This is more fully explained, as Eustathius observes, by Euripides, in his *Hippolytus*; where Diana says, it is not the custom of the gods to resist one the other, when they take vengeance even upon the favourites of other deities. The late tempest that Neptune had raised for the destruction of Ulysses, was an instance of Neptune's implacable anger: this makes Minerva take such measures as to avoid an open opposition, and yet consult the safety of Ulysses: she descends, but it is secretly.

This book takes up part of the night, and the whole thirty-second day; the vision of Nausicaa is related in the preceding night, and Ulysses enters the city a little after the sun sets in the following evening. So that thirty-two days are completed since the opening of the poem.

This book in general is full of life and variety: it is true, the

Stern god! who rag'd with vengeance unrestrain'd,
Till great Ulysses hail'd his native land.

subject of it is simple and unadorned, but improved by the poet, and rendered entertaining and noble. The muse of Homer is like his Minerva, with respect to Ulysses, who from an object of commiseration improves his majesty, and gives a grace to every feature.

THE
SEVENTH BOOK
OF THE
ODYSSEY.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE COURT OF ALCINOUS.

THE princess Nausicaa returns to the city, and Ulysses soon after follows thither. He is met by Pallas in the form of a young virgin, who guides him to the palace, and directs him in what manner to address the queen Arete. She then invokes him in a mist, which causes him to pass invisible. The palace and gardens of Alcinous described. Ulysses falling at the feet of the queen, the mist disperses, the Phæacians admire, and receive him with respect. The queen inquiring by what means he had the garments he then wore, he relates to her and Alcinous his departure from Calypso, and his arrival on their dominions.

The same day continues, and the book ends with the night.

THE
ODYSSEY.

BOOK VII.*

THE patient, heav'nly man thus suppliant pray'd;
While the slow mules draw on th' imperial maid:
'Through the proud street she moves, the public gaze:
The turning wheel before the palace stays.

* This book opens with the introduction of Ulysses to Alcinous; every step the poet takes carries on the main design of the poem, with a progress so natural, that each incident seems really to have happened, and not to be invention. Thus Nausicaa accidentally meets Ulysses, and introduces him to Alcinous her father, who lands him in Ithaca: it is possible this might be true history; the poet might build upon a real foundation, and only adorn the truth with the ornaments of poetry. It is to be wished, that a faithful history of the Trojan war, and the voyages of Ulysses had been transmitted to posterity; it would have been the best comment upon the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. We are not to look upon the poems of Homer as mere romances, but as true stories, heightened and beautified by poetry: thus the *Iliad* is built upon a real dissension, that happened in a real war between Greece and Troy; and the *Odyssey* upon the real voyages of Ulysses, and the disorders that happened through his absence in his own country. Nay, it is not impossible but that many of those incidents that seem most extravagant in Homer, might have an appearing truth, and be justified by the opinions, and mistaken cre-

With ready love her brothers gath'ring round, 5
 Receiv'd the vestures, and the mules unbound.
 She seeks the bridal bow'r: a matron there
 The rising fire supplies with busy care,
 Whose charms in youth her father's heart inflam'd,
 Now worn with age, Eurymedusa nam'd: 10

dulity of those ages. What is there in all Homer more seemingly extravagant, than the story of the race of the Cyclops, with one broad eye in their foreheads? and yet, as sir Walter Raleigh very judiciously conjectures, this may be built upon a seeming truth: they were a people of Sicily remarkable for savageness and cruelty, and perhaps might in their wars make use of a head-piece or vizor, which had but one sight in it, and this might give occasion to sailors who coasted those shores to mistake the single sight of the vizor, for a broad eye in the forehead, especially when they before looked upon them as monsters for their barbarity. I doubt not but we lose many beauties in Homer for want of a real history, and think him extravagant, when he only complies with the opinions of former ages. I thought it necessary to make this observation, as a general vindication of Homer; especially in this place, immediately before he enters upon the relation of those stories which have been thought most to outrage credibility: if then we look upon the *Odyssey* as all fiction, we consider it unworthily; it ought to be read as a story founded upon truth, but adorned with the embellishments of poetry, to convey instruction with pleasure the more effectually.

V. 10. *Eurymedusa nam'd.*] Eustathius remarks, that the Phæacians were people of great commerce, and that it was customary in those ages to exchange slaves in traffick; or perhaps Eurymedusa might be a captive, piracy then being honourable, and such seizures of cattle or slaves frequent. The passage concerning the brothers of Nausicaa has not escaped the censure of the critics: Homer in the original calls them 'like gods,' and yet in the same breath gives them the employment of slaves; they unyoke the mules, and carry into the palace the burdens they brought. A two-fold answer may be given

The captive dame Phæacian rovers bore,
 Snatch'd from Epirus, her sweet native shore,
 (A grateful prize) and in her bloom bestow'd
 On good Alcinous, honour'd as a god:
 Nurse of Nausicaa from her infant years, 15
 And tender second to a mother's cares.

Now from the sacred thicket where he lay,
 To town Ulysses took the winding way.
 Propitious Pallas, to secure her care,
 Around him spread a veil of thicken'd air; 20

to this objection, and this conduct might proceed from the general custom of the age, which made such actions reputable; or from the particular love the brothers bore their sister, which might induce them to act thus, as an instance of it.

V. 20. *Around him spread a veil of thicken'd air.*] It may be asked what occasion there is to make Ulysses invisible? Eustathius answers, not only to preserve him from insults as he was a stranger, but that he might raise a greater surprise in Alcinous by his sudden appearance. But, adds he, the whole is an allegory; and Ulysses wisely choosing the evening to enter unobserved, gave occasion to the poet to bring in the goddess of wisdom to make him invisible.

Virgil has borrowed this passage from Homer, and Venus renders Æneas invisible in the same manner as Minerva Ulysses. Scaliger compares the two authors, and prefers Virgil infinitely before Homer, in the fifth book of his Poetics.

' At Venus obscuro gradientes aere sepsit,
 Et multo nebulæ circum Dea sudit amictu;
 Cernere ne quis eos, non quis contingere posset,
 Molirive moram, aut veniendi poscere causas.'

Scaliger says the verses are more sonorous than Homer's, and that it was more necessary to make Æneas invisible than Ulysses, he being amongst a perfidious nation. But was not the danger as great from the rudeness of the Phæacians, as from the perfidiousness of the Car-

To shun th' encounter of the vulgar crowd,
 Insulting still, inquisitive and loud,
 When near the fam'd Phæacian walls he drew,
 The beauteous city opening to his view,
 His step a virgin met, and stood before; 25
 A polish'd urn the seeming virgin bore,

thaginians? Besides, Virgil does not mention the perfidiousness of the Carthaginians; so that it is the reason of Scaliger, not Virgil: and whether the verses be more sonorous, is submitted to the ear of the reader. He is chiefly delighted with

'Et multo nebulæ circum Dea fudit amictu.'

'Qui solus versus,' says he, 'deterreat Græcos ab ea sententiâ, quâ suum contendunt præferendum.' He allows *Κερτομοις τ' επεεσσι*, &c. to be a tolerably smooth verse, 'Commodus et rasilis,' but yet far inferior to this of Virgil:

Molirive moram, et veniendi poscere causas.'

It is but justice to lay the verses of Homer before the reader.

Και τοτ' οδυσευς ωρτο πολιν δ' ιμεν', αμφι δ' Αθηνη
 Πολλην ηερα χευε, φιλα φρονεασ' οδυσηι.
 Μητις φαιηκων μελαθυμων, ανιξολησας
 Κερτομοις τ' επεεσσι, και εξεριοιθ' οτις ειη.

I determine not which author has the greater beauty, but undoubtedly Homer is more happy in the occasion of the fiction than Virgil: Homer drew his description from the wisdom of Ulysses in entering the town in the evening, he was really invisible to the Phæacians, and Homer only heightened the truth by poetry; but Virgil is more bold, and has no such circumstance to justify his relation; for Æneas went into Carthage in the open day.

V. 26. — — *The seeming virgin*, &c.] It may be asked why Minerva does not appear as a goddess, but in a borrowed form? The poet has already told us, that she dreaded the wrath of Neptune; one deity could not openly oppose another deity, and therefore she acts thus invisibly.

And youthful smil'd; but in the low disguise
Lay hid the goddess with the azure eyes.

Show me, fair daughter, (thus the chief demands)
The house of him who rules these happy lands. 30
Through many woes and wand'rings, lo! I come
To good Alcinous' hospitable dome.

Far from my native coast, I rove alone,
A wretched stranger, and of all unknown!

The goddess answer'd. Father, I obey, 35
And point the wand'ring traveller his way:
Well known to me the palace you inquire,
For fast beside it dwells my honour'd sire;
But silent march, nor greet the common train
With question needless, or inquiry vain. 40

A race of rugged mariners are these;
Unpolish'd men, and boist'rous as their seas:
The native islanders alone their care,
And hateful he that breathes a foreign air.
These did the ruler of the deep ordain 45
To build proud navies, and command the main;
On canvas wings to cut the wat'ry way;
No bird so light, no thought so swift as they.

V. 47. *On canvas wings to cut the wat'ry way.*] This circumstance is not inserted without a good effect: it could not but greatly encourage Ulysses to understand that he was arrived amongst a people that excelled in navigation; this gave him a prospect of being speedily conveyed to his own country, by the assistance of a nation so expert in maritime affairs. EUSTATHIUS.

Thus having spoke, th' unknown celestial leads:
 The footsteps of the deity he treads, 50
 And secret moves along the crowded space,
 Unseen of all the rude Phæacian race.
 (So Pallas order'd, Pallas to their eyes
 The mist objected, and condens'd the skies.)
 The chief with wonder sees th' extended streets, 55
 The spreading harbours, and the riding fleets;
 He next their princes' lofty domes admires,
 In sep'rate islands crown'd with rising spires;

V. 53. — — *Pallas to their eyes the mist condenses.*] Scaliger in his Poetics calls this an impertinent repetition, and commends Virgil for not imitating it, for Homer dwells upon it no less than three times; and indeed one would almost imagine that Virgil was of the same opinion, for he has followed the turn of this whole passage, and omitted this repetition: yet he treads almost step by step in the path of Homer; and Æneas and Ulysses are drawn in the same colours;

‘ Miratur molem Æneas, ‘magalia quondam:
 Miratur portas, strepitumque et strata viarum.’

Θαυμαζεν δ' Ὀδυσσεύς λιμένας, καὶ νῆας εἰσας,
 Αὐτῶντ' Ἡρώων ἀγοράς, καὶ τεῖχεα μακρά,
 Ὑψηλὰ, σκολοπέσσην ἀκρότητα.

Homer poetically inserts the topography of this city of the Phæacians: though they were an unwarlike nation, yet they understand the art of fortification; their city is surrounded with a strong wall, and that wall guarded with palisades. But whence this caution, since Homer tells us in the preceding book, that they were in no danger of an enemy? it might arise from their very fears, which naturally suggest to cowards, that they cannot be too safe; this would make them practise the art of fortification more assiduously than a more brave people, who usually put more confidence in valour than in walls, as was the practice of the Spartans.

And deep intrenchments, and high walls of stone,
 That gird the city like a marble zone. 60
 At length the kingly palace gates he view'd:
 There stopp'd the goddess, and her speech renew'd.

My task is done; the mansion you inquire
 Appears before you: enter, and admire.
 High-thron'd, and feasting, there thou shalt behold
 The sceptred rulers. Fear not, but be bold: 66
 A decent boldness ever meets with friends,
 Succeeds, and ev'n a stranger recommends.
 First to the queen prefer a suppliant's claim,
 Alcinous' queen, Arete is her name, 70
 The same her parents, and her pow'r the same.
 For know, from Ocean's god Nausithous sprung,
 And Peribæa, beautiful and young:

V. 63. *My task is done, &c.*] As deities ought not to be introduced without a necessity, so, when introduced, they ought to be employed in acts of importance, and worthy of their divinity: it may be asked if Homer observes this rule in this Episode, where a goddess seems to appear only to direct Ulysses to the palace of Alcinous, which, as he himself tells us, a child could have done? but the chief design of Minerva was to advise Ulysses in his present exigencies: and (as Eustathius remarks) she opens her speech to him with great and noble sentiments. She informs him how to win the favour of Alcinous, upon which depends the whole happiness of her hero; and by which she brings about his re-establishment in his kingdom, the aim of the whole Odyssey. Virgil makes use of the same method in his *Æneis*, and Venus there executes the same office for her son, as Minerva for her favourite, in some degree as a guide, but chiefly as a counsellor.

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(Eurymedon's last hope, who rul'd of old
 The race of giants, impious, proud, and bold; 75
 Perish'd the nation in unrighteous war,
 Perish'd the prince, and left this only heir.)
 Who now by Neptune's am'rous pow'r compress'd,
 Produc'd a monarch that his people bless'd,
 Father and prince of the Phæacian name; 80
 From him Rhexenor and Alcinous came.
 The first by Phœbus' burning arrows fir'd,
 New from his nuptials, hapless youth! expir'd.
 No son surviv'd: Arete heir'd his state,
 And her, Alcinous chose his royal mate. 85

V. 74. *Eurymedon, &c*] This passage is worthy observation, as it discovers to us the time when the race of the ancient giants perished; this Eurymedon was grandfather to Nausithous, the father of Alcinous; so that the giants were extirpated forty or fifty years before the war of Troy. This exactly agrees with ancient story, which informs us, that Hercules and Theseus purged the earth from those monsters. Plutarch in his life of Theseus tells us, that they were men of great strength, and public robbers, one of whom was called the Bender of Pines. Now Theseus stole away Helen in her infancy, and consequently these giants were destroyed some years before the Trojan expedition. DACIER, PLUTARCH.

V. 84. &c. *Arete*.] It is observable that this Arete was both wife and niece to Alcinous, an instance that the Grecians married with such near relations: the same appears from Demosthenes and other Greek orators. But what then is the notion of incest amongst the ancients? The collateral branch was not thought incestuous, for Juno was the wife and sister of Jupiter. Brothers likewise married their brothers' wives, as Deiphobus Helen, after the death of Paris: the same was practised amongst the Jews, and consequently, being per-

With honours yet to womankind unknown,
 This queen he graces, and divides the throne:
 In equal tenderness her sons conspire,
 And all the children emulate their sire.
 When through the street she gracious deigns to move,
 (The public wonder, and the public love) 91
 The tongues of all with transport sound her praise,
 The eyes of all, as on a goddess, gaze.
 She feels the triumph of a gen'rous breast;
 To heal divisions, to relieve th' opprest; 95
 In virtue rich; in blessing others, blest.

mitted by Moses, was not incestuous. So that the only incest was in the ascending, not collateral or descending branch; as when parents and children married: thus when Myrrha lay with her father, and Lot with his daughters, this was accounted incest. The reason is very evident; a child cannot pay the duty of a child to a parent, and at the same time of a wife or husband; nor can a father act with the authority of a father towards a person who is at once his wife and daughter. The relations interfere, and introduce confusion, where the law of nature and reason requires regularity.

V. 95. *To heal divisions, &c.*] This office of Arete has been looked upon as somewhat extraordinary, that she should decide the quarrels of the subjects, a province more proper for Alcinous; and therefore the ancients endeavoured to soften it by different readings; and instead of οἰσιν τ' εὐφρονησῇσι, they inserted ἡσιν τ' εὐφρονεοῖσι, or 'she decides amongst women.' Eustathius in the text reads it in a third way, ἡσιν τ' εὐφροσυνῇσι, or 'by her wisdom.' Spondanus believes, that the queen had a share in the government of the Phæacians; but Eustathius thinks the poet intended to set the character of Arete in a fair point of light, she bearing the chief part in this book, and a great share in the sequel of the Odyssey; by this method he introduces her to the best advantage, and makes her a person of importance, and

Go then secure, thy humble suit prefer,
And owe thy country and thy friends to her.

With that the goddess deign'd no longer stay,
But o'er the world of waters wing'd her way: 100
Forsaking Scheria's ever-pleasing shore,
The winds to Marathon the virgin bore;
Thence, where proud Athens rears her tow'ry head,
With opening streets and shining structures spread,
She pass'd, delighted with the well-known seats; 105
And to Erectheus' sacred dome retreats.

Meanwhile Ulysses at the palace waits,
There stops, and anxious with his soul debates,
Fix'd in amaze before the royal gates.

worthy to have a place in heroic poetry: and indeed he has given her a very amiable character.

V. 109. *Fix'd in amaze before the royal gates.*] The poet here opens a very agreeable scene, and describes the beauty of the palace and gardens of Alcinous. Diodorus Siculus adapts this passage to the island Taprobane, Justin Martyr to Paradise; *Τὴ Παραδείσῳ δὲ εἰκόνα τὸν Ἀλκίνοῦ κήπον σὼζειν πεποιήκα*. He transcribes this whole passage into his Apology, but with some variation from the common editions, for instead of

— — — — — ἀλλὰ μάλ' αἶσι
Ζεφυρίῃ πνεύσασα, — — — he reads,
ἀλλ' αἶσι αὐρῇ ζεφυρίῃ, &c. perhaps more elegantly.

Eustathius observes that Homer suits his poetry to the things he relates, for in the whole Iliad there is not a description of this nature, nor an opportunity to introduce it in a poem that represents nothing but objects of terror and blood. The poet himself seems to go a little out of the way to bring it into the Odyssey; for it has no necessary connexion with the poem, nor would it be less perfect if it had been

The front appear'd with radiant splendours gay, 110
 Bright as the lamp of night, or orb of day,
 The walls were massy brass: the cornice high
 Blue metals crown'd, in colours of the sky:
 Rich plates of gold the folding doors incase;
 The pillars silver, on a brazen base; 115
 Silver the lintels deep-projecting o'er,
 And gold, the ringlets that command the door.
 Two rows of stately dogs, on either hand,
 In sculptur'd gold and labour'd silver stand.

omitted; but as Mercury, when he surveyed the bower of Calypso, ravished with the beauty of it, stood a while in a still admiration: so Homer, delighted with the scenes he draws, stands still a few moments, and suspends the story of the poem, to enjoy the beauties of these gardens of Alcinous. But even here he shews his judgment, in not letting his fancy run out into a long description: he concludes the whole in the compass of twenty verses, and resumes the thread of his story. Rapin, I confess, censures this description of the gardens: he calls it puerile, and too light for eloquence; that it is spun out to too great a length, and is somewhat affected; has no due coherence with, nor bears a just proportion to, the whole, by reason of its being too glittering. This is spoken with too great severity: it is necessary to relieve the mind of the reader sometimes with gayer scenes, that it may proceed with a fresh appetite to the succeeding entertainment. In short, if it be a fault, it is a beautiful fault; and Homer may be said here, as he was upon another occasion by St. Augustin, to be '*dulcissimè vanus*.' The admiration of the gold and silver is no blemish to Ulysses: for, as Eustathius remarks, it proceeds not out of avarice, but from the beauty of the work, and usefulness and magnificence of the buildings. The whole description, continues he, suits the character of the Phæacians, a proud, luxurious people, delighted with shew and ostentation.

V. 118. *Two rows of stately dogs, &c*] We have already seen that

These Vulcan form'd with art divine, to wait 120
 Immortal guardians at Alcinous' gate;
 Alive each animated frame appears,
 And still to live beyond the pow'r of years.
 Fair thrones within from space to space were rais'd,
 Where various carpets with embroid'ry blaz'd, 125
 The work of matrons: these the princes press'd,
 Day following day, a long continu'd feast.

dogs were kept as a piece of state, from the instance of those that attended Telemachus: here Alcinous has images of dogs in gold, for the ornament of his palace; Homer animates them in his poetry; but to soften the description, he introduces Vulcan, and ascribes the wonder to the power of a god. If we take the poetical dress away, the truth is, that these dogs were formed with such excellent art, that they seemed to be alive, and Homer, by a liberty allowable to poetry, describes them as really having that life, which they only have in appearance. In the Iliad he speaks of living tripods with greater boldness. Eustathius recites another opinion of some of the ancients, who thought these *Kupes*; not to be animals, but a kind of large nails (*ηλεις*) or pins, made use of in buildings, and to this day the name is retained by builders, as dogs of iron, &c. It is certain the words will bear this interpretation, but the former is more after the spirit of Homer, and more noble in poetry. Besides, if the latter were intended, it would be absurd to ascribe a work of so little importance to a deity.

V. 124. *Fair thrones within, &c.*] The poet does not say of what materials these thrones were made, whether of gold or silver, to avoid the imputation of being thought fabulous in his description; it being almost incredible, remarks Eustathius, that such quantities of gold and silver could be in the possession of such a king as Alcinous; though, if we consider that his people were greatly given to navigation, the relation may come within the bounds of credibility.

Refulgent pedestals the walls surround,
 Which boys of gold with flaming torches crown'd;
 The polish'd orc, reflecting ev'ry ray, 130
 Blaz'd on the banquets with a double day.
 Full fifty handmaids form the household train;
 Some turn the mill, or sift the golden grain;
 Some ply the loom; their busy fingers move
 Like poplar leaves, when Zephyr fans the grove. 135

V. 128. *Refulgent pedestals the walls surround,
 Which boys of gold with flaming torches crown'd.*]

This is a remarkable piece of grandeur: lamps, as appears from the eighteenth of the Odyssey, were not at this time known to the Grecians, but only torches: these were held by images in the shape of beautiful youths, and those images were of gold. Lucretius has translated these verses.

' — — Aurea sunt juvenum simulacra per ædis,
 Lampades igniferas manibus retinentia dextris,
 Lumina nocturnis cpulis ut suppeditentur.'

It is admirable to observe with what propriety Homer adapts his poetry to the characters of his persons: Nestor is a wise man; when he is first seen in the Odyssey it is at sacrifice, and there is not the least appearance of pomp or luxury in his palace or entertainments. The Phæacians are of an opposite character, and the poet describes them consistently with it; they are all along a proud, idle, effeminate people; though such a pompons description would have ill suited the wise Nestor, it excellently agrees with the vain Alcinous.

V. 135. *Like poplar leaves when Zephyr fans the grove.*] There is some obscurity in this short allusion, and some refer it to the work, others to the damsels employed in work. Eustathius is of the opinion that it alludes to the damsels, and expresses the quick and continued motion of their hands: I have followed this interpretation, and think

Close to the gates a spacious garden lies,
From storms defended and inclement skies.

V. 142. *Close to the gates a spacious garden lies*] This famous garden of Alcinous contains no more than four acres of ground, which in those times of simplicity was thought a large one even for a prince. It is laid out, as Eustathius observes, into three parts: a grove for fruits and shade, a vineyard, and an allotment for olives and herbs. It is watered with two fountains, the one supplies the palace and town, the other the garden and the flowers. But it may be asked what reality there is in the relation, and whether any trees bear fruit all the year in this island? Eustathius observes, that experience teaches the contrary, and that it is only true of the greatest part of the year: Homer, adds he, disguises the true situation of the Phæacians, and here describes it as one of the happy islands; at once to enrich his poetry, and to avoid a discovery of his poetical exaggeration. The relation is true of other places, if Pliny and Theophrastus deserve credit, as Dacier observes; thus the citron bears during the whole year fruits and flowers. ‘*Arbos ipsa omnibus horis pomifera, aliis cadentibus, aliis maturescentibus, aliis vero subnascentibus.*’ The same is related of other trees by Pliny: ‘*Novusque fructus in his cum annotino pendet,*’ he affirms the like of the pine, ‘*Habet fructum maturescentem, habet proximo anno ad maturitatem, venturum, ac deinde tertio,*’ &c. So that what Homer relates is in itself true, though not entirely of Phæacia. Or perhaps it might be only intended for a more beautiful and poetical manner of describing the constant succession of one fruit after another in a fertile climate.

‘ — — — Figs on figs arise.’

Aristotle applied this hemestick scoffingly to the sycophants of Athens: he was about to leave that city upon its rejoicing at the death of Socrates: and, quoting this verse, he said he would not live in a place where

— — — — Γηρασται συκων δ' επι συκω.

alluding to the derivation of the word sycophant. EUSTATHIUS.

Four acres was th' allotted space of ground,
 Fenc'd with a green enclosure all around, 145
 Tall thriving trees confess'd the fruitful mould;
 The red'ning apple ripens here to gold.
 Here the blue fig with luscious juice o'erflows,
 With deeper red the full pomegranate glows,
 The branch here bends beneath the weighty pear,
 And verdant olives flourish round the year. 151

'Some dry the black'ning clusters in the sun.'

To understand this passage aright, it is necessary to know the manner of ordering the vintage amongst the Greeks. First, they carried all the grapes they gathered into a house for a season; afterwards they exposed them ten days to the sun, and let them lie abroad as many nights in the freshness of the air; then they kept them five days in cool shades, and on the sixth they trod them, and put the wine into vessels. This we learn from Hesiod: *ερίων*, v. 229.

— — — Πανίαις ἀποδρεπε σικαδὲ βοτρυς
 Δεῖξαι δ' ἡελίῳ δεκά τ' ἡμέλαι καὶ δεκά νυκτὶς
 Πενίε δὲ συσκιασαι, ἐκτὼ δ' εἰς αἴγῃ ἀφυσσαι
 Δώρα Διωνυσῆ πολλὰ γῆθε —

Homer distinguishes the whole into three orders: first, the grapes that have already been exposed to the sun are trod; the second order is of the grapes that are exposed, while the others are treading; and the third, of those that are ripe to be gathered, while the others are thus ordering. Homer himself thus explains it, by saying, that while some vines were loaded with black and mature grapes, others were green, or but just turning to blackness. Homer undoubtedly founds this poetical relation upon observing some vines that bore fruit thrice annually. Pliny affirms this to be true, lib. xvi. cap. 27. 'Vites quidem et triferæ sunt, quas ob id insanas vocant, quoniam in iis aliæ, matureacunt, aliæ turgescunt, aliæ florent.' DACIER.

The balmy spirit of the western gale
 Eternal breathes on fruits untaught to fail:
 Each dropping pear a following pear supplies,
 On apples apples, figs on figs arise: 155
 The same mild season gives the blooms to blow,
 The buds to harden, and the fruits to grow.

Herc order'd vines in equal ranks appear,
 With all th' united labours of the year;
 Some to unload the fertile branches run, 160
 Some dry the black'ning clusters in the sun,
 Others to tread the liquid harvest join,
 The groaning presses foam with floods of wine.
 Here are the vines in early flow'r descry'd,
 Here grapes discolour'd on the sunny side, 165
 And there in autumn's richest purple dy'd.

Beds of all various herbs, for ever green,
 In beauteous order terminate the scene.

Two plenteous fountains the whole prospect crown'd;
 This through the gardens leads its streams around,
 Visits each plant, and waters all the ground: 171
 While that in pipes beneath the palace flows,
 And thence its current on the town bestows;
 To various use their various streams they bring,
 The people one, and one supplies the king. 175

Such were the glories which the gods ordain'd,
 To grace Alcinous, and his happy land.
 Ev'n from the chief, who men and nations knew,
 Th' unwonted scene surprise and rapture drew;

In pleasing thought he ran the prospect o'er, 180
 Then hasty enter'd at the lofty door.
 Night now approaching, in the palace stand,
 With goblets crown'd, the rulers of the land;
 Prepar'd for rest, and off'ring to the god*
 Who bears the virtue of the sleepy rod. 185
 Unseen he glided through the joyous crowd,
 With darkness circled, and an ambient cloud.
 Direct to great Alcinous' throne he came,
 And prostrate fell before th' imperial dame.
 Then from around him drop'd the veil of night; 190
 Sudden he shines, and manifest to sight.

* Mercury.

V. 184. *Prepar'd for rest, and off'ring to the god
 Who bears the virtue of the sleepy rod.*

I have already explained from Athenæus this custom of offering to Mercury at the conclusion of entertainments: he was thought by the ancients to preside over sleep. 'Dat somnos adinitque,' according to Horace, as Dacier observes. In following ages this practice was altered, and they offered not to Mercury, but to Jove the perfecter, or to ΣΕΥΣ ΤΕΛΕΙΟΣ.

V. 190. *Then from around him drop'd the veil of night.*] If this whole story of the veil of air had been told simply and nakedly, it would imply no more than that Ulysses arrived without being discovered; and the breaking of the veil denotes his first coming into sight, in the presence of the queen. But Homer steps out of the vulgar road of an historian, and clothes it with a sublimity worthy of heroic poetry. In the same manner Virgil discovers his Æneas to Dido:

— — — — Cum circumfusa repente
 Scindit se nubes, et in aera purgat apertum.

Scaliger prefers these verses to those of Homer, and perhaps with

The nobles gaze, with awful fear oppress;
 Silent they gaze, and eye the godlike guest.

Daughter of great Rhexenor! (thus began
 Low at her knees, the much-induring man) 195
 To thee, thy consort, and this royal train,
 To all that share the blessings of your reign,
 A suppliant bends: oh pity human woe!
 'Tis what the happy to th' unhappy owe.
 A wretched exile to his country send, 200
 Long worn with griefs, and long without a friend.

good reason; he calls the last part of the second verse a divine addition; and indeed it is far more beautiful than the *Σεφάλοσ ἀνὴρ* of Homer.

V. 196. *To thee, thy consort, and this royal train.*] Minerva commanded Ulysses to supplicate the queen: why then does he exceed the directions of the goddess, and not only address himself to Alcinous, but to the rest of the assembly? Spondanus answers, that Ulysses adapts himself to the present circumstances, and seeing the king and other peers in the same assembly, he thought it improper not to take notice of them: he therefore addresses himself to all, that he may make all his friends. But then does not Minerva give improper directions? and is not Ulysses more wise than the goddess of wisdom? The true reason therefore may perhaps be, that Ulysses really complies with the injunctions of the goddess: she commands him to address himself to the queen; and he does so: this I take to mean chiefly or primarily, but not exclusively of the king: if the passage be thus understood, it solves the objection.

V. 200. *A wretched exile to his country send.*] Ulysses here speaks very concisely: and he may seem to break abruptly into the subject of his petition, without letting the audience either into the knowledge of his condition or person. Was this a proper method to prevail over an assembly of strangers? But his gesture spoke for him, he threw himself into the posture of a suppliant, and the persons of

So may the gods your better days increase,
 And all your joys descend on all your race,
 So reign for ever on your country's breast,
 Your people blessing, by your people blest ! 205

Then to the genial hearth he bow'd his face,
 And humbled in the ashes took his place.

all suppliants were esteemed to be sacred : he declared himself to be a man in calamity, and reserves his story to be told more at large, when the surprise of the Phæacians at the sudden appearance of a stranger was over; this consciousness therefore is not blameable, but rather an instance of Homer's judgment, who knows when to be short, and when to be copious.

V. 207. *And humbled in the ashes took his place.*] This was the custom of suppliants : they betook themselves to the hearth as sacred, and a place of refuge. It was particularly in the protection of Vesta : thus Tully, lib. ii. de Naturâ Deorum ; ' Nomen Vestæ sumptum est a Græcis, ea est enim quæ illis εστία dicitur, jusque ejus ad aras, et focos pertinet.' Apollonius likewise, as Spondanus observes, takes notice of this custom of suppliants.

Τῷ δ' ἀνευ, καὶ ἀναυδοί, ἐφ' ἐσλῆ αἰζάνῃς
 ἰζάνον, ἥτε δικῇ λυτροῖς μετῆσι τετυκίαι.

That is, they betook themselves to the hearth, and there sat mute, which is the custom of all unhappy suppliants. If it was a custom, as Apollonius observes, to sit mute, this gives another reason why Ulysses used but few words in his supplication : he had greatly outraged a practice that was established as sacred amongst the Greeks, and had not acted in the character of a suppliant, if he had launched out into a long oration.

This was the most sure and effectual way of supplication ; thus, when Themistocles fled to Admetus king of the Molossians, he placed himself before the hearth, and was received, though that king had formerly vowed his destruction. Plutarch indeed calls it an unusual way of supplication ; but that proceeded from his carrying a child in

Silence ensu'd. The eldest first began,
 Echeneus sage, a venerable man!
 Whose well-taught mind the present age surpast, 210
 And join'd to that th' experience of the last.
 Fit words attended on his weighty sense,
 And mild persuasion flow'd in eloquence.

Oh sight (he cry'd) dishonest and unjust!
 A guest, a stranger, seated in the dust! 215
 To raise the lowly suppliant from the ground
 Befits a monarch. Lo! the peers around
 But wait thy word, the gentle guest to grace,
 And seat him fair in some distinguish'd place.
 Let first the herald due libation pay 220
 To Jove, who guides the wand'rer on his way;
 Then set the genial banquet in his view,
 And give the stranger-guest a stranger's due.

His sage advice the list'ning king obeys,
 He stretch'd his hand the prudent chief to raise, 225
 And from his seat Laodamas remov'd,
 (The monarch's offspring, and his best belov'd)

his arms to move the greater compassion, not from his throwing himself into the protection of the household gods.

V. 209. *Echeneus sage, &c.*] The expression in the original, as Dacier observes, is remarkable: 'Echeneus an old man, who knew many ancient, and great variety of things;' he was wise by long experience, and by being conversant in ancient story: the author of the book of Wisdom speaks almost in the same expressions: 'Scit præterita et de futuris æstimat.'

V. 226. *And from his seat Laodamas remov'd.*] Plutarch in his *Symposiacks* discusses a question, whether the master of the feast

There next his side the godlike hero sat ;
 With stars of silver shone the bed of state.
 The golden ew'r a beauteous handmaid brings, 230
 Replenish'd from the cool translucent springs,
 Whose polish'd vase with copious streams supplies
 A silver laver, of capacious size.
 The table next in regal order spread,
 The glitt'ring canisters are heap'd with bread: 235
 Viands of various kinds invite the taste,
 Of choicest sort and savour, rich repast !
 Thus feasting high, Alcinous gave the sign,
 And bade the herald pour the rosy wine.
 Let all around the due libation pay 240
 To Jove, who guides the wand'rer on his way.
 He said. Pontonus heard the king's command ;
 The circling goblet moves from hand to hand :
 Each drinks the juice that glads the heart of man.
 Alcinous then, with aspect mild, began. 245

should place his guests, or let them seat themselves promiscuously :
 he there commends this conduct of Alcinous, as an instance of a cour-
 teous disposition and great humanity, who gave a place of dignity to
 a stranger and suppliant.

V. 240. — — — *the due libation pay*
To Jove ——]

We have already seen that the whole assembly was about to pour
 libations to Mercury; whence is it then that they now offer to Jupi-
 ter? Eustathius observes, it was because of the arrival of this stranger,
 and Jupiter presides over all strangers, and is frequently stiled *Zeus*
ἑστίας and *Zeus ἑστίας*.

Princes and peers, attend! while we impart
To you, the thoughts of no inhuman heart.
Now pleas'd and satiate from the social rite
Repair we to the blessings of the night:
But with the rising day, assembled here, 250
Let all the elders of the land appear,
Pious observe our hospitable laws,
And heav'n propitiate in the stranger's cause:
Then join'd in council, proper means explore
Safe to transport him to the wish'd-for shore: 255
(How distant that, imports not us to know,
Nor weigh the labour, but relieve the woe)
Meantime, nor harm nor anguish let him bear:
This interval, heav'n trusts him to our care;
But to his native land our charge resign'd, 260
Heav'n's is his life to come, and all the woes behind.
Then must he suffer what the fates ordain;
For fate has wove the thread of life with pain,
And twins ev'n from the birth, are misery and man!
But if descended from th' Olympian bow'r, 265
Gracious approach us some immortal pow'r;
If in that form thou com'st a guest divine:
Some high event the conscious gods design.
As yet, unbid they never grac'd our feast,
The solemn sacrifice call'd down the guest: 270
Then manifest of heav'n the vision stood,
And to our eyes familiar was the god.

Oft with some favour'd traveller they stray,
 And shine before him all the desert way:
 With social intercourse, and face to face, 275
 The friends and guardians of our pious race.
 So near approach we their celestial kind,
 By justice, truth, and probity of mind;

V. 277. *So near approach we their celestial kind, &c.*] There is some intricacy in this passage, and much labour has been used to explain it. Some would have it to imply, that 'we are as nearly allied to the gods, as the Cyclops and giants, who are descended from them; and if the gods frequently appear to these giants who defy them, how much more may it be expected by the Phæacians to enjoy that favour, who reverence and adore them?' Eustathius explains it after another method: Alcinous had conceived a fixed hatred against the race of the Cyclops, who had expelled the Phæacians from their country, and forced them to seek a new habitation; he here expresses that hatred, and says, that the Phæacians resemble the gods as much in goodness, as the Cyclops and giants one the other in impiety: he illustrates it, by shewing that the expression has the same import as if we should say that Socrates comes as near to Plato in virtue, as Anytus and Melitus to one another in wickedness; and indeed the construction will be easy, by understanding *Αλληγοις* in the second verse.

— — — Σφισιν εγγυθεν ειμεν,

Ωσπερ κυκλωπες τε και ωγρια φυλα γιγαντων.

Subaudi, *εγγυθεν αλληλοις εισιν*.

I have already spoken of the presence of the gods at the sacrifices, in a former note upon the *Odyssey*: this frequent intercourse of the gods was agreeable to the theology of the ancients; but why then is Alcinous surprised at the appearance of Ulysses, whom he looks upon as a god, if such favours were frequent? Spondanus replies, that it is the unusualness of the time, not the appearance, that surprises Alcinous; the gods appeared either at their sacrifices, or in their journeys, and therefore he looks upon this visit as a thing extraordinary.

As our dire neighbours of Cyclopæan birth,
Match in fierce wrong, the giant-sons of earth. 280

Let no such thought (with modest grace rejoind
The prudent Greek) possess the royal mind.

Alas! a mortal, like thyself, am I;

No glorious native of yon azure sky:

In form, ah how unlike their heav'nly kind? 285

How more inferior in the gifts of mind?

Alas, a mortal! most oppress'd of those

Whom fate has loaded with a weight of woes;

By a sad train of miseries alone

Distinguish'd long, and second now to none! 290

By heav'n's high will compell'd from shore to shore;

With heav'n's high will prepar'd to suffer more.

What histories of toil could I declare?

But still long-weary'd nature wants repair;

Spent with fatigue, and shrunk with pining fast, 295

My craving bowels still require repast.

Howe'er the noble, suff'ring mind, may grieve

Its load of anguish, and disdain to live;

Necessity demands our daily bread;

Hunger is insolent, and will be fed. 300

But finish, oh ye peers! what you propose,

And let the morrow's dawn conclude my woes.

Pleas'd will I suffer all the gods ordain,

To see my soil, my son, my friends, again.

That view vouchsaf'd, let instant death surprise 305

With ever-during shade these happy eyes!

Th' assembled peers with gen'ral praise approv'd
 His pleaded reason, and the suit he mov'd.
 Each drinks a full oblivion of his cares,
 And to the gifts of balmy sleep repairs. 310
 Ulysses in the regal walls alone
 Remain'd: beside him, on a splendid throne,
 Divine Arete and Alcinous shone.
 The queen, on nearer view, the guest survey'd
 Rob'd in the garments her own hands had made; 315
 Not without wonder seen. Then thus began,
 Her words addressing to the godlike man.

Cam'st thou not hither, wond'rous stranger! say,
 From lands remote, and o'er a length of sea?
 Tell then whence art thou? whence that princely air?
 And robes like these, so recent and so fair! 321

V. 305. *That view vouchsaf'd, let instant death, &c.*] It is very necessary to recall frequently to the reader's mind the desire Ulysses has to reach his own country; and to shew that he is absent not by choice, but necessity; all the disorders in his kingdoms happen by reason of his absence: it is therefore necessary to set the desire of his return in the strongest point of light, that he may not seem accessary to those disorders, by being absent when it was in his power to return. It is observable that Ulysses does not here make any mention of Penelope, whom he scarce ever omits in other places, as one of the chief inducements to wish for his country; the reason of his silence, says Eustathius, is, because he is unwilling to abate the favour of Alcinous, by a discovery that would shew it was impossible for him to marry his daughter; such a discovery might make the king proceed more coolly towards his transportation; whereas it would afterwards be less dangerous, when he has had an opportunity fully to engage him in his favour.

Hard is the task, oh princess! you impose:
 (Thus sighing spoke the man of many woes)
 The long, the mournful series to relate
 Of all my sorrows, sent by heav'n and fate! 325
 Yet what you ask, attend. An island lies
 Beyond these tracts, and under other skies,

V. 322. *Hard is the task, oh princess!*] Æneas in Virgil speaks to Venus after the same manner, as Ulysses to Arete.

' O Dea, si primâ repetens ab origine pergam,
 Et vacet annales nostrorum audire laborum,
 Ante diem clauso componet vesper Olympo.'

Scaliger observes that Virgil so far exceeds the verses of Homer, that they will not even bear a comparison; he is superior almost in every word: for instance; he renders, *διγενεως*, by 'primâ ab origine,' and adds the word 'vacet' beautifully; and still more beautifully he translates *πολλα κηδεα*, 'annales nostrorum audire laborum;' and lastly he paraphrases the word *αργαλειον* by a most harmonious line,

' Ante diem clauso componet vesper Olympo.'

Which excellently describes the multitude of the sufferings of Æneas, which could not be comprehended in the relation of a whole day.

I will not deny but that Virgil excels Homer in this and many other passages, which he borrows from him: but then is it a just conclusion to infer, after the manner of Scaliger, that Virgil is a better poet than Homer? To conclude from particulars to generals is a false way of arguing. It is as if in a comparison of two persons, a man should from single features give a superiority of beauty, which is only to be gathered from the symmetry of the whole body.

V. 326. *Yet what you ask, attend.* —] Homer here gives a summary of the subject of the two preceding books: this recapitulation cannot indeed be avoided, because it is necessary to let Alcinous into his story, and this cannot be done without a repetition; but generally all repetitions are tedious: the reader is offended when

Ogygia named, in Ocean's wat'ry arms:
 Where dwells Calypso, dreadful in her charms!
 Remote from gods or men she holds her reign, 330
 Amid the terrors of the rolling main.

that is related which he knows already: he receives no new instruction to entertain his judgment, nor any new descriptions to excite his curiosity, and by these means the very soul of poetry is extinguished, and it becomes uninspired and lifeless. When therefore repetitions are absolutely necessary, they ought always to be short; and I may appeal to the reader, if he is not tired with many in Homer, especially when made in the very same words? Here indeed Ulysses tells his story but in part; the queen asked him who he was, but he passes over this without any reply, and reserves the greatest part of his story to a time of more leisure, that he may discover himself to a better advantage before the whole peerage of the Phæacians. I do not always condemn even the verbal repetitions of Homer; sometimes, as in embassies, they may be necessary, because every word is stamped with authority, and perhaps they might be customary in Homer's times; if they were not, he had too fruitful an invention not to have varied his thoughts and expressions. Bossu observes, that with respect to repetitions, Virgil is more exact than Homer; for instance, in the first book of the *Æneis*, when *Æneas* is repeating his sufferings to *Venus*, she interrupts him to give him comfort:

‘ — — — Nec plura querentem
 Passa Venus, medio sic interfata dolore est.’

and in the third book, where good manners obliged this hero to relate his story at the request of *Andromache*, the poet prevents it by introducing *Helenus*, who hinders the repetition.

V. 330. *Remote from gods or men she holds her reign.*] Homer has the secret art of introducing the best instructions, in the midst of the plainest narrations. He has described the unworthy passion of the goddess *Calypso*, and the indecent advances she made to detain him from his country. It is possible this relation might make some impressions upon the mind of the reader, inconsistent with exact mora-

Me, only me, the hand of fortune bore
 Unbless'd! to tread that interdicted shore:
 When Jove tremendous in the sable deeps
 Launch'd his red lightning at our scatter'd ships: 335
 Then, all my fleet, and all my foll'wers lost,
 Sole on a plank, on boiling surges tost,
 Heav'n drove my wreck th' Ogygian isle to find,
 Full nine days floating to the wave and wind.
 Met by the goddess there with open arms, 340
 She brib'd my stay with more than human charms;
 Nay promis'd, vainly promis'd, to bestow
 Immortal life, exempt from age and woe.
 But all her blandishments successless prove,
 To banish from my breast my country's love. 345

lity: what antidote then does Homer administer to expel this poison? he does not content himself with setting the chastity of Penelope in opposition to the loose desires of Calypso, and shewing the great advantage the mortal had over the goddess; but he here discovers the fountain from whence this weakness rises, by saying, that neither man nor gods frequented this island; on one hand the absence of the gods, and on the other the infrequency of objects, made her yield at the sight of the first that appears. Every object is dangerous in solitude, especially, as Homer expresses it, if we have no commerce with the gods. DACIER.

V. 344. *But all her blandishments successless prove* —] Dacier from Eustathius assigns the reason of the refusal of Ulysses to comply with the proffers of Calypso, to forsake his wife and country: it was, because he knew that women in love promise more than they either can, or intend to perform. An insinuation, that he would have complied if he had thought the goddess would, or could have performed her promises. But this is contrary to the character of Ulysses, whose

I stay reluctant sev'n continu'd years,
And water her ambrosial couch with tears.
The eighth, she voluntary moves to part,
Or urg'd by Jove, or her own changeful heart.
A raft was form'd to cross the surging sea ; 350
Herself supply'd the stores and rich array ;
And gave the gales to waft me on the way.
In sev'nteen days appear'd your pleasing coast,
And woody mountains half in vapours lost.
Joy touch'd my soul: my soul was joy'd in vain, 355
For angry Neptune rous'd the raging main ;
The wild winds whistle, and the billows roar ;
The splitting raft the furious tempest tore ;
And storms vindictive intercept the shore.
Soon as their rage subsides, the seas I brave 360
With naked force, and shoot along the wave,
To reach this isle: but there my hopes were lost,
The surge impell'd me on a craggy coast.
I chose the safer sea, and chanc'd to find
A river's mouth impervious to the wind, 365
And clear of rocks. I fainted by the flood ;
Then took the shelter of the neighb'ring wood.
'Twas night; and cover'd in the foliage deep,
Jove plung'd my senses in the death of sleep.

greatest glory it is, not to have listened even to a goddess. In this view he ceases to be an hero, and his return is no longer a virtue, but he returns only because he found not a temptation sufficient to keep him from his country.

All night I slept, oblivious of my pain : 370

Aurora dawn'd, and Phœbus shin'd in vain,

Nor till oblique he slop'd his ev'ning ray,

Had Somnus dry'd the balmy dew's away.

Then female voices from the shore I heard :

A maid amidst them, goddess-like, appear'd : 375

To her I su'd, she pity'd my distress ;

Like thee in beauty, nor in virtue less.

Who from such youth could hope consid'rate care ?

In youth and beauty wisdom is but rare !

V. 379. *In youth and beauty wisdom is but rare !*] In the preceding line Ulysses speaks of Nausicaa, yet immediately changes the words into the masculine gender, for grammatically it ought to be *νεωτερον ανηλασασαι*. Homer makes this alteration to pay the greater compliment to Nausicaa, and he intends to express by it, that neither woman nor man of her years could be expected to have such remarkable discretion. EUSTATHIUS.

Such sentences being very frequent in the Odyssey, it may not be improper to observe, of what beauty a sentence is in epic poetry. A sentence may be defined, a moral instruction couched in a few words. Rapin asserts, that sentences are more proper in dramatic than heroic poetry: for narration is the essential character of it, and it ought to be one continued thread of discourse, simple and natural, without an affectation of figures, or moral reflections: that energy which some pretend to collect and enclose within a small compass of words, is wont extremely to weaken the rest of the discourse, and give it a forced air: it seems to jut out of the structure of the poem, and to be independent of it: he blames Homer for scattering his sentences too plentifully through his poesy, and calls it an affectation and imperfection. These objections would undoubtedly be of weight, if the sentences were so introduced as to break the thread of narration, as Rapin rightly observes. But is this the case with relation to Homer? He puts them into the mouth of the actors themselves, and the narra-

She gave me life, reliev'd with just supplies 380
 My wants, and lent these robes that strike your eyes,
 This is the truth: and oh ye pow'rs on high!
 Forbid that want should sink me to a lie.

To this the king. Our daughter but exprest
 Her cares imperfect to our godlike guest. 385
 Suppliant to her, since first he chose to pray,
 Why not herself did she conduct the way,
 And with her handmaids to our court convey?

Hero and king! (Ulysses thus reply'd)
 Nor blame her faultless, nor suspect of pride: 390
 She bade me follow in th' attendant train;
 But fear and rev'rence did my steps detain,

tion goes on without the least interruption; it is not the poet who speaks, nor does he suspend the narration to make a refined reflection, or give us a sentence of morality. Is his poetry the worse, because he makes his agents speak weightily and sententially? It is true, sentences used without moderation are absurd in epic poetry; they give it a seriousness that is more becoming the gravity of philosophers, than the spirit and majesty of poetry. Bossu judiciously observes, that such thoughts have in their very nature a certain kind of calm wisdom that is contrary to the passions; but, says he, sentences make a poem useful, and it seems natural to imagine, that the more a work is embellished with them, the more it deserves that general approbation which Horace promises to those who have the art to mix the profitable with the pleasant. In short, sentences are not only allowable, but beautiful in heroic poetry, if they are introduced with propriety and without affectation.

V. 391. *She bade me follow ———*
But fear and rev'rence, &c.]

This is directly contrary to what is before asserted in the preceding

Lest rash suspicion might alarm thy mind :
 Man's of a jealous and mistaking kind.

Far from my soul (he cry'd) the gods efface
 All wrath ill-grounded, and suspicion base! 396
 Whate'er is honest, stranger, I approve,
 And would to Phœbus, Pallas, and to Jove,
 Such as thou art, thy thought and mine were one,
 Nor thou unwilling to be call'd my son. 400
 In such alliance couldst thou wish to join,
 A palace stor'd with treasures should be thine.

book, where Nausicaa forbids Ulysses to attend her, to avoid suspicion and slander. Is not Ulysses then guilty of falsehood, and is not falsehood beneath the character of a hero? Eustathius confesses that Ulysses is guilty, *φανερως ψευδεῖται*; and he adds, that a wise man may do sometimes opportunely: *Ὅπερ αν ποιήσει εν καιρω ο σοφος*. I fear this concession of the bishop's would not pass for good casuistry in these ages. Spondanus is of the same opinion as Eustathius; 'Vir prudens certo loco et tempore mendaciis officiosissimis uti novit.' Dacier confesses that he somewhat disguises the truth. It will be difficult to vindicate Ulysses from the imputation, if the notions of truth and falsehood were as strict in former, as in these ages: but we must not measure by this standard: it is certain that anciently lying was reckoned no crime by a whole nation; and it still bears a dispute, 'An omne falsi-loquium sit mendacium?' Some casuists allow of the 'officium mendacium,' and such is this of Ulysses, entirely complimentary and officious.

V. 400. *Nor thou unwilling to be call'd my son.*] The ancients observe, that Alcinoüs very artfully inserts this proposition to Ulysses, to prove his veracity. If he had embraced it without hesitation, he would have concluded him an impostor; for it is not conceivable that he should reject all the temptation to marriage made him by Calypso a goddess, and yet immediately embrace this offer of Alcinoüs to marry his daughter. But if we take the passage in another sense,

But if reluctant, who shall force thy stay?
 Jove bids to set the stranger on his way,
 And ships shall wait thee with the morning ray. 405
 Till then, let slumber close thy careful eyes;
 The wakeful mariners shall watch the skies,
 And seize the moment when the breezes rise:
 Then gently waft thee to the pleasing shore,
 Where thy soul rests, and labour is no more. 410
 Far as Eubæa though thy country lay,
 Our ships with ease transport thee in a day.

and believe that Alcinous spoke sincerely without any secret suspicions, yet his conduct is justifiable. It has, I confess, appeared shocking, that Alcinous, a king, should at the very first interview offer his daughter to a stranger, who might be a vagrant and impostor: but examples are frequent in antiquity of marriages thus concluded between strangers, and with as little hesitation: thus Bellerophon, Tydeus, and Polynices were married. Great personages regarded not riches, but were only solicitous to procure worthy husbands for their daughters, and birth and virtue were the best recommendations.

It is observable that in the original there is a chasm, an infinitive mood without any thing to govern it; we must therefore supply the word *εβελοις* to make it right construction. EUSTATHIUS.

V. 411. *Far as Eubæa though thy country lay.*] Eubæa, as Eustathius observes, is really far distant from Corcyra, the country of the Phæacians: but Alcinous still makes it more distant, by placing it in another part of the world, and describing it as one of the Fortunate islands: for in the fourth book Rhadamanthus is said to inhabit the Elysian fields. Alcinous therefore endeavours to have it believed that his isle is near those fields, by asserting that Rhadamanthus made use of Phæacian vessels in his voyage to Tityus. Eustathius further adds, that Rhadamanthus was a prince of great justice,

Thither of old, Earth's * giant-son to view,
 On wings of winds with Rhadamanth they flew:
 This land, from whence their morning course begun,
 Saw them returning with the setting sun. 416

and Tityus a person of great impiety, and that he made this voyage to bring him over to more virtuous dispositions.

V. 415. *This land, from whence their morning course begun,
 Saw them returning with the setting sun.*]

If Homer had given the true situation of Corcyra as it really lies opposite to Epirus, yet the hyperbole of sailing thence to Eubæa and returning in the same day, had been utterly an impossibility; for in sailing thither, they must pass the Ionian and Icarian seas, and double the Peloponnesus. But the fiction is yet more extravagant, by the poet's placing it still more distant near the Fortunate islands. But what is impossible for vessels to effect, that are as swift as birds, and can sail with the rapidity of a thought? EUSTATHIUS.

But then is the poet justifiable for relating such incredible amplifications? It may be answered, if he had put these extravagancies into the mouth of Ulysses, he had been unpardonable, but they suit well with the character of Alcinoüs: they let Ulysses into his disposition, and he appears to be ignorant, credulous, and ostentatious. This was necessary, that Ulysses might know how to adapt himself to his humour, and engage his assistance; and this he actually brings about by raising his wonder and esteem by stories, that could not fail to please such an ignorant and credulous person as Alcinoüs.

Dacier adds, that the Phæacians were so puffed up with their constant felicity and the protection of the gods, that they thought nothing impossible; upon this opinion all these hyperboles are founded: and this agrees too well with human nature; the more happy men are, the more high and extravagantly they talk, and are too apt to entertain themselves with wild chimeras, which have no existence but in the imagination.

* Tityus.

Your eyes shall witness and confirm my tale,
 Our youth how dext'rous, and how fleet our sail,
 When justly tim'd with equal sweep they row,
 And ocean whitens in long tracks below. 420

Thus he. No word th' experienc'd man replies,
 But thus to heav'n (and heav'nward lifts his eyes)
 O Jove! oh father! what the king accords
 Do thou make perfect! sacred be his words!
 Wide o'er the world Alcinous' glory shine! 425
 Let fame be his, and ah! my country mine!

Meantime Arete, for the hour of rest
 Ordains the fleecy couch, and cov'ring vest:
 Bids her fair train the purple quilts prepare,
 And the thick carpets spread with busy care. 430
 With torches blazing in their hands they past,
 And finish'd all their queen's command with haste:
 Then gave the signal to the willing guest:
 He rose with pleasure, and retir'd to rest.

The moral then to these fables of Alcinous is, that a constant series of happiness intoxicates the mind, and that moderation is often learned in the school of adversity.

V. 423. *The prayer of Ulysses.*] It is observable, that Ulysses makes no reply directly to the obliging proposition which the king made concerning his daughter. A refusal might have been disadvantageous to his present circumstances, yet an answer is implied in this prayer, which shews the impatience he has to return to his country, and the gratitude he feels for his promises to effect it: and consequently it discovers that he has no intentions of settling with his daughter amongst the Phæacians. DACIER.

There, soft-extended, to th' murm'ring sound 435
Of the high porch, Ulysses sleeps profound!
Within, releas'd from cares Alcinous lies;
And fast beside, were clos'd Arete's eyes.

V. 437, 438. *The last lines.*] It may seem somewhat extraordinary, that Alcinous and his queen, who have been described as patterns of conjugal happiness, should sleep in distinct beds. Jupiter and Juno, as Dacier observes from the first of the Iliad, have the same bed. Perhaps the poet designed to shew the luxury and false delicacy of those too happy Phæacians, who lived in such softness that they shunned every thing that might prove troublesome or inconvenient.

This book takes up no longer time than the evening of the thirty-second day.

THE
EIGHTH BOOK
OF THE
ODYSSEY.

THE ARGUMENT.

ALCINOUS calls a council, in which it is resolved to transport Ulysses into his country. After which splendid entertainments are made, where the celebrated musician and poet Demodocus plays and sings to the guests. They next proceed to the games, the race, the wrestling, discus, &c. where Ulysses casts a prodigious length, to the admiration of all the spectators. They return again to the banquet, and Demodocus sings the loves of Mars and Venus. Ulysses, after a compliment to the poet, desires him to sing the introduction of the wooden horse into Troy; which subject provoking his tears, Alcinous inquires of his guest his name, parentage, and fortunes.

THE ODYSSEY.

BOOK VIII.*

Now fair Aurora lifts her golden ray,
And all the ruddy orient flames with day:

* This book has been more severely censured by the critics than any in the whole *Odyssey*: it may therefore be thought necessary to lay before the reader what may be offered in the poet's vindication.

Scaliger in his *Poetics* is very warm against it. Demodocus, observes that critic, sings the lust of the gods (*ædities*) at the feast of Alcinous. And Bossu, though he vindicates the poet, remarks that we meet with some offensive passages in Homer, and instances in the adultery of Mars and Venus.

To know (says Aristotle in his *Art of Poetry*) whether a thing be well or ill spoken, we must not only examine the thing whether it be good or ill, but we must also have regard to him that speaks or acts, and to the person to whom the poet addresses; for the character of the person who speaks, and of him to whom he speaks, makes that to be good, which would not come well from the mouth of any other person. It is not on this account we vindicate Homer with respect to the immorality that is found in the fable of the adultery of Mars and Venus: we must consider that it is neither the poet, nor his hero, that recites that story: but a Phæacian sings it to Phæacians, a soft, effeminate people, at a festival. Besides, it is allowable even in grave and moral writings to introduce vicious persons, who despise the gods;

Alcinous, and the chief, with dawning light,
Rose instant from the slumbers of the night;

and is not the poet obliged to adapt his poetry to the characters of such persons? And had it not been an absurdity in him to have given us a philosophical or moral song before a people who would be pleased with nothing but gaiety and effeminacy? The moral that we are to draw from this story is, that an idle and soft course of life is the source of all criminal pleasures; and that those persons who lead such lives, are generally pleased to hear such stories, as make their betters partakers in the same vices. This relation of Homer is a useful lesson to them who desire to live virtuously; and it teaches, that if we would not be guilty of such vices, we must avoid such a method of life as inevitably leads to the practice of them.

Rapin attacks this book on another side, and blames it not for its immorality, but lowness. Homer, says he, puts off that air of grandeur and majesty which so properly belongs to his character; he debases himself into a droll, and sinks into a familiar way of talking: he turns things into ridicule, by endeavouring to entertain his reader with something pleasant and diverting: for instance, in the eighth book of the *Odyssey*, he entertains the gods with a comedy, some of whom he makes buffoons: Mars and Venus are introduced upon the stage, taken in a net laid by Vulcan, contrary to the gravity which is so essential to epic poetry.

It must be granted, that the gods are here painted in colours unworthy of deities, yet still with propriety, if we respect the spectators, who are ignorant, debauched Phæacians. Homer was obliged to draw them, not according to his own idea of the gods, but according to the wild fancies of the Phæacians. The poet is not at liberty to ascribe the wisdom of a Socrates to Alcinous: he must follow nature, and, like a painter, he may draw deities or monsters, and introduce, as he pleases, either vicious or virtuous characters, provided he always makes them of a piece, consistent with their first representation.

This rule of Aristotle in general, vindicates Homer, and it is necessary to carry it in our minds, because it ought to be applied to all incidents that relate to the Phæacians in the sequel of the *Odyssey*.

Then to the council-seat they bend their way, 5
And fill the shining thrones along the bay.

Meanwhile Minerva, in her guardian care,
Shoots from the starry vault through fields of air;
In form, a herald of the king she flies
From peer to peer, and thus incessant cries. 10

Nobles and chiefs who rule Phæacia's states,
The king in council your attendance waits:
A prince of grace divine your aid implores,
O'er unknown seas arriv'd from unknown shores.

She spoke, and sudden with tumultuous sounds
Of thronging multitudes the shore rebounds: 16

V. 6. *And fill the shining thrones along the bay.*] This place of council was between the two ports, where the temple of Neptune stood; probably, like that in the second book, open to the air.

V. 9. *In form, a herald*——] It may be asked what occasion there is to introduce a goddess, to perform an action that might have been as well executed by a real herald? Eustathius observes, that this Minerva is either *Fame*, which informs the Phæacians that a stranger of uncommon figure is arrived, and upon this report they assemble; or it implies, that this assembly was made by the wisdom of the peers, and consequently a poet may ascribe it to the goddess of wisdom, it being the effect of her inspiration.

The poet, by the introduction of a deity, warns us, that something of importance is to succeed; this is to be ushered in with solemnity, and consequently the appearance of Minerva in this place is not unnecessary: the action of importance to be described is no less than the change of the fortunes of Ulysses; it is from this assembly that his affairs take a new turn, and hasten to a happy re-establishment.

V. 13. *A prince of form divine*——] Minerva speaks thus in favour of Ulysses, to excite the curiosity of the Phæacians: and indeed the short speech is excellently adapted to this purpose. They were fond of strangers: the goddess therefore tells them, that a stranger is

At once the seats they fill: and every eye
 Gaz'd, as before some brother of the sky.
 Pallas, with grace divine his form improves,
 More high he treads, and more enlarg'd he moves:
 She sheds celestial bloom, regard to draw; 21
 And gives a dignity of mien, to awe;
 With strength, the future prize of fame to play,
 And gather all the honours of the day.

Then from his glitt'ring throne Alcinous rose: 25
 Attend, he cry'd, while we our will disclose.

arrived of a godlike appearance. They admired outward show, he is therefore described as a man of extraordinary beauty, and Minerva for this reason immediately improves it. EUSTATHIUS.

V. 19. *Pallas, with grace divine his form improves.*] This circumstance has been repeated several times almost in the same words, since the beginning of the Odyssey. I cannot be of opinion that such repetitions are beauties. In any other poet they might have been thought to proceed from a poverty of invention, though certainly not in Homer, in whom there is rather a superfluity than barrenness. Perhaps having once said a thing well, he despaired of improving it, and so repeated it; or perhaps he intended to inculcate this truth, that all our accomplishments, as beauty, strength, &c. are the gifts of the gods; and being willing to fix it upon the mind, he dwells upon it, and inserts it in many places. Here indeed it has a particular propriety, as it is a circumstance that first engages the Phæacians in the favour of Ulysses: his beauty was his first recommendation, and consequently the poet with great judgment sets his hero off to the best advantage, it being an incident from which he dates all his future happiness; and therefore to be insisted upon with a particular solemnity. Plato in his Theætetus applies the latter part of this description to Parmenides. Αἰδοῖός τε μοι φαίνεται εἶναι, ἀλλὰ δεινός τε.

V. 25. *From his glitt'ring throne Alcinous rose.*] It might be expected that Ulysses, upon whose account alone Alcinous calls this

Your present aid this godlike stranger craves,
Tost by rude tempest through a war of waves;
Perhaps from realms that view the rising day,
Or nations subject to the western ray. 30
Then grant, what here all sons of woe obtain
(For here affliction never pleads in vain),
Be chosen youths prepar'd, expert to try
The vast profound, and bid the vessel fly:
Launch the tall bark, and order ev'ry oar; 35
Then in our court indulge the genial hour.

assembly, should have made his condition known, and spoken himself to the Phæacians; whereas he appears upon the stage as a mute person, and the multitude departs entirely ignorant of his name and fortunes. It may be answered, that this was not a proper time for a fuller discovery, the poet defers it till Ulysses had distinguished himself in the games, and fully raised their curiosity. It is for the same reason that Ulysses is silent; if he had spoken, he could not have avoided to let them into the knowledge of his condition, but the contrary method is greatly for his advantage, and assures him of success from the recommendation of a king.

But there is another, and perhaps a better reason, to be given for this silence of Ulysses: the poet reserves the whole story of his sufferings for an entire and uninterrupted narration; if he had now made any discovery, he must afterwards either have fallen into tautology, or broken the thread of the relation, so that it would not have been of a piece, but wanted continuity. Besides, it comes with more weight at once, than if it had been made at several times, and consequently makes a deeper impression upon the memory and passion of the auditors. Virgil has taken a different method in the discovery of Æneas; there was a necessity for it; his companions, to engage Dido in their protection, tell her they belong to no less a hero than Æneas, so that he is in a manner known before he appears; but Virgil, after the example of Homer, reserves his story for an entire narration.

Instant, you sailors, to this task attend;
 Swift to the palace, all ye peers ascend;
 Let none to strangers honours due disclaim:
 Be there, Demodocus, the bard of fame, 40
 Taught by the gods to please, when high he sings
 The vocal lay, responsive to the strings.

Thus spoke the prince: th' attending peers obey,
 In state they move; Alcinous leads the way:
 Swift to Demodocus the herald flies, 45
 At once the sailors to their charge arise:
 They launch the vessel, and unfurl the sails,
 And stretch the swelling canvas to the gales;
 Then to the palace move: a gath'ring throng,
 Youth, and white age, tumultuous pour along: 50

V. 35. *Launch the tall bark* —] The word in the original is *πρωτοπλοῖον*; which signifies not only a ship that makes its first voyage, but a ship that outsails other ships, as Eustathius observes. It is not possible for a translator to retain such singularities with any beauty; it would seem pedantry and affectation, and not poetry.

V. 41. *Taught by the gods to please* —] Homer here insinuates that all good and great qualities are the gifts of God. He shews us likewise, that music was constantly made use of in the courts of all the Oriental princes, we have seen Phemius in Ithaca, a second in Lacedæmon with Menelaus, and Demodocus here with Alcinous. The Hebrews were likewise of remarkable skill in music; every one knows what effect the harp of David had upon the spirit of Saul. Solomon tells us, that he sought out singing men and singing women to entertain him like these in Homer, at the time of feasting: thus another Oriental writer compares music at feasts to an emerald enclosed in gold; 'as a signet of an emerald set in a work of gold, so is the melody of music with pleasant wine.' Ecclus. xxxii. 6. *ΔΑΚΤΥΛ.*

Now all accesses to the dome are fill'd;
 Eight boars, the choicest of the herd, are kill'd;
 Two beeves, twelve fatlings from the flock they bring
 To crown the feast; so wills the bounteous king.
 The herald now arrives, and guides along 55
 The sacred master of celestial song:
 Dear to the muse! who gave his days to flow
 With mighty blessings, mix'd with mighty woe;

V. 57. *Dear to the muse! who gave his days to flow
 With mighty blessings, mix'd with mighty woe.]*

- It has been generally thought that Homer represents himself in the person of Demodocus; and Dacier imagines that this passage gave occasion to the ancients to believe that Homer was blind. But that he really was blind is testified by himself in his Hymn to Apollo, which Thucydides asserts to be the genuine production of Homer, and quotes it as such in his history.

Ω κραι, τις δ' υμιν ανηρ, ηδιστ' αοιδων,
 Ενθαδε πωλειται; και τω τερπεσθε μαλιστα;
 Τμεις δ' ευ μαλα πασαι υποκρινασθε, αφ' υμεων
 Τυφλος ανηρ — — —

That is, 'O virgins, if any person asks you who is he, the most pleasing of all poets, who frequents this place, and who is he who most delights you? reply, he is a blind man,' &c. It is true, as Eustathius observes, that there are many features in the two poets that bear a great resemblance: Demodocus sings divinely, the same is true of Homer; Demodocus sings the adventures of the Greeks before Troy, so does Homer in his Iliad.

If this be true, it must be allowed that Homer has found out a way of commending himself very artfully: had he spoken plainly, he had been extravagantly vain; but by this indirect way of praise, the reader is at liberty to apply it either solely to Demodocus, or obliquely to Homer.

With clouds of darkness quench'd his visual ray,
But gave him skill to raise the lofty lay. 60
High on a radiant throne sublime in state,
Encircled by huge multitudes, he sat:
With silver shone the throne; his lyre well strung
To rapturous sounds, at hand Pontonous hung:
Before his seat a polish'd table shines, 65
And a full goblet foams with gen'rous wines:
His food a herald bore: and now they fed;
And now the rage of craving hunger fled.

Then fir'd by all the muse, aloud he sings
The mighty deeds of demigods and kings: 70
From that fierce wrath the noble song arose,
That made Ulysses and Achilles foes:
How o'er the feast they doom the fall of Troy;
The stern debate Atrides hears with joy:

It is remarkable, that Homer takes a very extraordinary care of Demodocus his brother poet; and introduces him as a person of great distinction. He calls him in this book the hero Demodocus: he places him on a throne studded with silver, and gives him an herald for his attendant; nor is he less careful to provide for his entertainment, he has a particular table, and a capacious bowl set before him to drink as often as he had a mind, as the original expresses it. Some merry wits have turned the last circumstance into raillery, and insinuate that Homer in this place, as well as in the former, means himself in the person of Demodocus; an intimation, that he would not be displeased to meet with the like hospitality.

V. 74. *The stern debate Atrides hears with joy.*] This passage is not without obscurity, but Eustathius thus explains it from Athenæus. In the Iliad the generals sup with Agamemnon with sobriety and moderation: and if in the Odyssey we see Achilles and Ulysses in

For heav'n foretold the contest, when he trod 75
 The marble threshold of the Delphic god,
 Curious to learn the counsels of the sky,
 Ere yet he loos'd the rage of war on Troy.

Touch'd at the song, Ulysses straight resign'd
 To soft affliction all his manly mind: 80

contention to the great satisfaction of Agamemnon, it is because these contentions are of use to his affairs; they contend whether force or stratagem is to be employed to take Troy; Achilles after the death of Hector, persuaded to assault it by storm, Ulysses by stratagem. There is a further reason given for the satisfaction which Agamemnon expresses at the contest of these two heroes: before the opening of the war of Troy he consulted the oracle concerning the issue of it; Apollo answered, that Troy should be taken when two princes most renowned, the one for wisdom and the other for valour, should contend at a sacrifice of the gods: Agamemnon rejoices to see the prediction fulfilled, knowing that the destruction of Troy was at hand, the oracle being accomplished by the contest of Ulysses and Achilles.

V. 79. *Touch'd at the song* —] Many objections may be made against this relation; it may seem to offend against probability, and appears somewhat incredible, that Demodocus should thus luckily pitch upon the war of Troy for the subject of his song, and still more happily upon the deeds of Ulysses; for instance, a man may die of an apoplexy, this is probable; but that this should happen just when the poet has occasion for it, is in some degree incredible. But this objection will cease, if we consider, not only that the war of Troy was the greatest event of those ages, and consequently might be the common subject of entertainment; but also, that it is not Homer or Demodocus who relates the story, but the muse who inspires it; Homer several times in this book ascribes the song to immediate inspiration; and this supernatural assistance reconciles it to human probability, and the story becomes credible when it is supposed to be related by a deity. Aristotle in his Poetics commends this conduct as artful and judicious; Alcinous, says he, invites Ulysses to an entertainment to

Before his eyes the purple vest he drew,
 Industrious to conceal the falling dew:
 But when the music paus'd, he ceas'd to shed
 The flowing tear, and rais'd his drooping head:
 And lifting to the gods a goblet crown'd, 85
 He pour'd a pure libation to the ground.

Transported with the song, the list'ning train
 Again with loud applause demand the strain:
 Again Ulysses veil'd his pensive head,
 Again unmann'd a show'r of sorrow shed: 90
 Conceal'd he wept: the king observ'd alone
 The silent tear, and heard the secret groan:

divert him, where Demodocus sings his actions, at which he cannot refrain from tears, which Alcinous perceives, and this brings about the discovery of Ulysses,

It may further be objected, that a sufficient cause for this violence of tears is not apparent; for why should Ulysses weep to hear his own brave achievements, especially when nothing calamitous is recited? This indeed would be improbable, if that were the whole of what the poet sung; but Homer only gives us the heads of the song, a few sketches of a larger draught, and leaves something to be filled up by the imagination of the reader. Thus, for instance, the words of Demodocus recalled to the mind of Ulysses all the hardships he had undergone during a ten years war, all the scenes of horror he had beheld, and the loss and sufferings of all his friends. And no doubt he might weep even for the calamities he brought upon Troy; an ingenuous nature cannot be insensible when any of its own species suffers: the Trojans were his enemies, but still they were men, and compassion is due even to unfortunate enemies. I doubt not but it will be allowed, that there is here sufficient cause to draw tears from a hero, unless a hero must be supposed to be divested of humanity.

Then to the bard aloud: O cease to sing,
 Dumb be thy voice, and mute th' harmonious string;
 Enough the feast has pleas'd, enough the pow'r 90
 Of heav'nly song has crown'd the genial hour!
 Incessant in the games your strength display,
 Contest, ye brave, the honours of the day!
 That pleas'd th' admiring stranger may proclaim
 In distant regions the Phæacian fame: 100
 None wield the gauntlet with so dire a sway,
 Or swifter in the race devour the way;
 None in the leap spring with so strong a bound,
 Or firmer, in the wrestling, press the ground.

Thus spoke the king; th' attending peers obey:
 In state they move, Alcinous leads the way: 110
 His golden lyre Demodocus unstrung,
 High on a column in the palace hung:
 And guided by a herald's guardian cares,
 Majestic to the lists of Fame repairs. 120

Now swarms the populace; a countless throng,
 Youth and hoar age; and man drives man along:

V. 101. *None wield the gauntlet with so dire a sway.*] Eustathius asks how Alcinous could make such an assertion, and give the preference to his people before all nations, when he neither knew, nor was known to, any heroes out of his own island? He answers, that he speaks like a Phæacian, with ostentation and vanity; besides it is natural for all people to form, not illaudibly, too favourable a judgment of their own country: and this agrees with the character of the Phæacians in a more particular manner, who call themselves *αἰχιδεῖς*, and the favourites of the gods.

The games begin; ambitious of the prize,
 Acroneus, Thoon, and Eretmeus rise;
 The prize Ocyalus and Prynneus claim, 115
 Anchialus and Penteus, chiefs of fame:
 There Proreus, Nautes, Eratreus appear,
 And fam'd Amphialus, Polyneus' heir:
 Euryalus, like Mars terrific, rose,
 When clad in wrath he withers hosts of foes: 120

V. 113. *The games* —] Eustathius remarks, that Homer very judiciously passes over these games in a few lines, having in the *Iliad* exhausted that subject; he there enlarged upon them, because they were essential ornaments, it being necessary that Patroclus should be honoured by his friend with the utmost solemnity. Here they are only introduced occasionally, and therefore the poet hastens to things more requisite, and carries on the thread of his story. But then it may be asked, why are they mentioned at all, and what do they contribute to the re-establishment of Ulysses? It is evident that they are not without an happy effect; they give Ulysses an opportunity to signalize his character, to engage the king and the peers in his favour, and this induces them to convey him to his own country, which is one of the most material incidents in the whole *Odyssey*.

V. 119. *Euryalus, like Mars terrific, rose.*] I was at a loss for a reason why this figure of terror was introduced amongst an unwarlike nation, upon an occasion contrary to the general description, in the midst of games and diversions. Eustathius takes notice, that the poet distinguishes the character of Euryalus, to force it upon our observation; he being the person who uses Ulysses with roughness and inhumanity, and is the only peer that is described with a sword, which he gives to Ulysses to repair his injury.

He further remarks, that almost all the names of the persons who are mentioned as candidates in these games are borrowed from the sea, Phæacia being an island, and the people greatly addicted to navigation. I have taken the liberty to vary from the order observed by

Naubolides with grace unequall'd shone,
 Or equall'd by Laodamas alone.
 With these came forth Ambasineus the strong:
 And three brave sons, from great Alcinous sprung.

Rang'd in a line the ready racers stand, 125
 Start from the goal, and vanish o'er the strand:
 Swift as on wings of wind upborn they fly,
 And drifts of rising dust involve the sky:
 Before the rest, what space the hinds allow
 Between the mule and ox, from plough to plough;

Homer in the catalogue of the names, to avoid the affinity of sound in many of them, as Euryalus, Ocyalus, &c. and too many names being tedious, at least in English poetry, I passed over the three sons of Alcinous, Laodamas, Halius, and Glytoneus, and only mentioned them in general as the sons of Alcinous.

I was surprised to see Dacier render

— — — — υιος Πολυνης Τεκτονιδας.

The son of Polyneus the carpenter; it looks like burlesque: it ought to be rendered, The son of Polyneus Tectonides, a Patronymic, and it is so understood by all commentators.

V. 129. — — — *What space the hinds allow*

Between the mule and ox, from plough to plough.

This image drawn from rural affairs is now become obsolete, and gives us no distinct idea of the distance between Clytoneus and the other racers; but this obscurity arises not from Homer's want of perspicuity, but from the change which has happened in the method of tillage, and from a length of time which has effaced the distinct image which was originally stamped upon it; so that what was understood universally in the days of Homer is grown almost unintelligible to posterity. Eustathius only observes, that the teams of mules were placed at some distance from the teams of oxen; the mule being more swift in his

Clytonous sprung: he wing'd the rapid way, 131

And bore th' unrivall'd honours of the day.

With fierce embrace the brawny wrestlers join ;

The conquest, great Euryalus, is thine.

Amphialus sprung forward with a bound, 135

Superior in the leap, a length of ground :

From Elatreus' strong arm the discus flies,

And sings with unmatch'd force along the skies.

And Laodam whirls high, with dreadful sway,

The gloves of death, victorious in the fray. 140

While thus the peerage in the games contends,

In act to speak, Laodamas ascends :

O friends, he cries, the stranger seems well skill'd

'To try th' illustrious labours of the field :

I deem him brave ; then grant the brave man's claim,

Invite the hero to his share of fame. 146

What nervous arms he boasts ! how firm his tread !

His limbs how turn'd ! how broad his shoulders spread !

By age unbroke ! — but all-consuming care

Destroys perhaps the strength that time would spare :

labour than the ox, and consequently more ground was allowed to the mule than the ox by the husbandman. This gives us an idea that Clytoneus was the foremost of the racers, but how much is not to be discovered with any certainty. Aristarchus, as Didymus informs us, thus interprets Homer. 'As much as a yoke of mules set to work at the same time with a yoke of oxen, outgoes the oxen (for mules are swifter than oxen), so much Clytoneus outwent his competitors.' The same description occurs in the tenth book of the *Iliad*, verse 419, to which passage I refer the reader for a more large and different explanation.

Dire is the ocean, dread in all its forms! 151

Man must decay, when man contends with storms.

Well hast thou spoke (Euryalus replies),
Thine is the guest, invite him thou to risc.
Swift at the word advancing from the crowd 155
He made obeisance, and thus spoke aloud.

Vouchsafes the rev'rend stranger to display
His manly worth, and share the glorious day?
Father, arise! for thee thy port proclaims
Expert to conquer in the solemn games. 160
To fame arise! for what more fame can yield
Than the swift race, or conflict of the field?
Steal from corroding care one transient day,
To glory give the space thou hast to stay;

V. 149. *By age unbroke!*] It is in the original literally, 'he wants not youth;' this is spoken according to appearance only, for Ulysses must be supposed to be above forty, having spent twenty years in the wars of Troy, and in his return to his country. It is true Hesiod calls a person a youth, *αιζηρον*, who was forty years of age, but this must be understood with some allowance, unless we suppose that the life of man was longer in the times of Hesiod, than in these later ages; the contrary of which appears from many places in Homer, where the shortness of man's life is compared to the leaves of trees, &c. But what the poet here relates is very justifiable, for the youth which Ulysses appears to have, proceeds from Minerva; it is not a natural quality, but conferred by the immediate operation of a goddess.

This speech concludes with an address of great beauty: Laodamas invites Ulysses to act in the games, yet at the same time furnishes him with a decent excuse to decline the invitation, if it be against his inclinations; should he refuse, he imputes the refusal to his calamities, not to any want of skill, or personal inability.

Short is the time, and lo! ev'n now the gales 165
Call thee aboard, and stretch the swelling sails.

To whom with sighs Ulysses gave reply:
Ah why th' ill-suiting pastime must I try?
To gloomy care my thoughts alone are free;
Ill the gay sports with troubled hearts agree: 170
Sad from my natal hour my days have ran,
A much-afflicted, much-enduring man!
Who suppliant to the king and peers, implores
A speedy voyage to his native shores.

Wide wanders, Laodam, thy erring tongue, 175
The sports of glory to the brave belong,
(Retorts Euryalus:) he boasts no claim
Among the great, unlike the sons of Ianc.
A wand'ring merchant he frequents the main,
Some mean sca-farer in pursuit of gain; 180
Studious of freight, in naval trade well skill'd,
But dreads th' athletic labours of the field.

Incens'd Ulysses with a frown replies,
O forward to proclaim thy soul unwise!

V. 167. ——— *Ulysses gave reply.*] These are the first words spoken by Ulysses before the Phæacians; and we cannot but be curious to know how he makes his address to engage a people, in whom he has no personal interest, in his favour. His speech is excellently adapted to this purpose: he represents himself as a suppliant to the king and all the assembly; and all suppliants being esteemed sacred, he at once makes it a duty in all the assembly to protect him; if they refuse to assist him, they become guilty of no less a crime, than a violation of the laws of hospitality.

With partial hands the gods their gifts dispense; 185
 Some greatly think, some speak with manly sense;
 Here heav'n an elegance of form denies,
 But wisdom the defect of form supplies:
 This man with energy of thought controuls,
 And steals with modest violence our souls, 190

V. 190. *And steals with modest violence our souls,
 He speaks reserv'dly, but he speaks with force.]*

There is a difficulty in the Greek expression, *ασφαλεως αγορευει, αιδοι μειλιχνη*; that is, 'he speaks securely with a winning modesty.' Dionysius Halicarnassus interprets it, in his 'Examination of Oratory,' to signify that the orator argues 'per concessa,' and so proceeds with certainty, or *ασφαλεως*; without danger of refutation. The word properly signifies without 'stumbling,' *απροσκοπως*, as in the proverb cited by Eustathius, *φορηλοτερον ποσιν ηπερ γλωττη προσκοπιειν*; that is, 'it is better to stumble with the feet than with the tongue.' The words are concise, but of a very extensive comprehension, and take in every thing, both in sentiments and diction, that enters into the character of a complete orator. Dacier concurs in the same interpretation; 'He speaks reservedly, or with caution; he hazards nothing that he would afterwards wish (repentir) to alter. And all his words are full of sweetness and modesty.' These two lines are found almost literally in Hesiod's Theogony, v. 92.

*Ερχομενον δ' ανα αστυ, θεον ως ιλασκοιται
 Αιδοι μειλιχνη. Μετα δε περιπει αγορευομεναισιν.*

Whether Homer borrowed these verses from Hesiod, or Hesiod from Homer, is not evident. Tully in his book de Senectute is of opinion, that Homer preceded Hesiod many ages, and consequently in his judgment the verses are Homer's. I question not but he had this very passage in view in his third book of his Orator. 'Quem stupefacti dicentem intuentur, quem Deum, ut ita dicam, inter homines putant;' which is almost a translation of Homer.

He speaks reserv'dly, but he speaks with force,
 Nor can one word be chang'd but for a worse;
 In public more than mortal he appears,
 And as he moves the gazing crowd reverts.
 While others beauteous as th' ethereal kind, 195
 The nobler portion want, a knowing mind.
 In outward show heav'n gives thee to excel,
 But heav'n denies the praise of thinking well.
 Ill bear the brave a rude ungovern'd tongue,
 And, youth, my gen'rous soul resents the wrong: 200
 Skill'd in heroic exercise, I claim
 A post of honour with the sons of Fame:

V. 201. *Skill'd in heroic exercise, I claim*

A post of honour with the sons of fame.]

It may be thought that Ulysses, both here and in his subsequent speech, is too ostentatious, and that he dwells more than modesty allows upon his own accomplishments: but self-praise is sometimes no fault. Plutarch has wrote a dissertation, how a man may praise himself without envy: what Ulysses here speaks is not a boast but a justification. Persons in distress, says Plutarch, may speak of themselves with dignity: it shews a greatness of soul, and that they bear up against the storms of fortune with bravery: they have too much courage to fly to pity and commiseration, which betray despair and an hopeless condition: such a man struggling with ill fortune shews himself a champion, and if by a bravery of speech he transforms himself from miserable and abject, into bold and noble, he is not to be censured as vain or obstinate, but great and invincible.

This is a full justification of Ulysses, he opposes virtue to calumny; and what Horace applies to himself we apply to this hero.

'Quæsitam meritis, sume superbiam.'

Besides, it was necessary to shew himself a person of figure and dis-

Such was my boast, while vigour crown'd my days,
 Now care surrounds me, and my force decays;
 Inur'd a melancholy part to bear, 205
 In scenes of death, by tempest and by war.
 Yet thus by woes impair'd, no more I wave
 To prove the hero.—Slander stings the brave.

Then striding forward with a furious bound,
 He wrench'd a rocky fragment from the ground. 210
 By far more pond'rous and more huge by far,
 Than what Phæacia's sons discharg'd in air.
 Fierce from his arm th' enormous load he flings;
 Sonorous through the shaded air it sings;
 Couch'd to the earth, tempestuous as it flies, 215
 The crowd gaze upward while it cleaves the skies.
 Beyond all marks, with many a giddy round
 Down rushing, it up-turns a hill of ground.

That instant Pallas, bursting from a cloud,
 Fix'd a distinguish'd mark, and cry'd aloud. 220

tion, to recommend his condition to the Phæacians: he was a stranger to the whole nation, and he therefore takes a probable method to engage their assistance by acquainting them with his worth; he describes himself as unfortunate, but yet as a hero in adversity.

V. 219. *That instant Pallas, bursting from a cloud.*] There is not a passage in the whole Odyssey, where a deity is introduced with less apparent necessity: the goddess of wisdom is brought down from heaven to act what might have been done as well by any of the spectators, namely, to proclaim what was self-evident, the victory of Ulysses. When a deity appears, our expectations are awakened for the introduction of something important, but what action of import-

Ev'n he who sightless wants his visual ray,
 May by his touch alone award the day:
 Thy signal throw transcends the utmost bound
 Of ev'ry champion by a length of ground:
 Securely bid the strongest of the train 225
 Arise to throw: the strongest throws in vain.

She spoke; and momentary mounts the sky:
 The friendly voice Ulysses hears with joy;
 Then thus aloud, (elate with decent pride)
 Rise, ye Phæacians, try your force, he cry'd; 230
 If with this throw the strongest caster vic,
 Still, further still, I bid the discus fly.
 Stand forth, ye champions, who the gauntlet wield,
 Or you, the swiftest racers of the field!

ance succeeds? It is true, her appearance encourages Ulysses, and immediately upon it he challenges the whole Phæacian assembly. But he was already victor, and no further action is performed. If indeed she had appeared openly in favour of Ulysses, this would have been greatly advantageous to him, and the Phæacians must have highly revered a person who was so remarkably honoured by a goddess: but it is not evident that the Phæacians, or even Ulysses, knew the deity, but took her for a man, as she appeared to be; and Ulysses himself immediately rejoices that he had found a friend in the assembly. If this be true, the descent of Pallas will prove very unnecessary; for if she was esteemed to be merely human, she acts nothing in the character of a deity, and performs no more than might have been performed by a man, and consequently gave no greater courage to Ulysses than a friend actually gave, for such only he believed her to be. Eustathius appears to be of the same opinion, for he says the place is to be understood allegorically, and what is thus spoken by a Phæacian with wisdom, is by the poet applied to the goddess of it.

Stand forth, ye wrestlers, who these pastimes grace!
 I wield the gauntlet, and I run the race. 236
 In such heroic games I yield to none,
 Or yield to brave Laodamas alone:
 Shall I with brave Laodamas contend?
 A friend is sacred, and I stile him friend. 240
 Ungen'rous were the man, and base of heart,
 Who takes the kind, and pays th' ungrateful part;
 Chiefly the man, in foreign realms confin'd,
 Base to his friend, to his own interest blind:
 All, all your heroes I this day defy; 245
 Give me a man, that we our might may try.

V. 239. *Shall I with brave Laodamas contend?*

A friend is sacred, and I stile him friend.]

Nothing can be more artful than this address of Ulysses; he finds a way in the middle of a bold challenge, to secure himself of a powerful advocate, by paying an ingenious and laudable deference to his friend. But it may be asked if decency be observed, and ought Ulysses to challenge the father Alcinous (for he speaks universally), and yet except his son Laodamas, especially when Alcinous was more properly his friend than Laodamas? And why should he be excepted, rather than the other brothers? Spondanus answers, that the two brothers are included in the person of Laodamas, they all have the same relation to Ulysses, as being equally a suppliant to them all, and consequently claim the same exemption from this challenge as Laodamas; and Alcinous is not concerned in it; he is the judge and arbitrator of the games (not a candidate) like Achilles in the Iliad. But why is Laodamas named in particular? He was the elder brother, and Ulysses might therefore be consigned to his care in particular, by the right due to his seniority; besides, he might be the noblest personage, having conquered his antagonist at the gauntlet, which was the most dangerous, and consequently the most honourable exercise, and therefore Ulysses might pay him peculiar honours. SPONDANUS,

Expert in ev'ry art, I boast the skill
 To give the feather'd arrow wings to kill;
 Should a whole host at once discharge the bow,
 My well-aim'd shaft with death prevents the foe: 250
 Alone superior in the field of Troy,
 Great Philoctetes taught the shaft to fly.
 From all the sons of earth unrivall'd praise
 I justly claim; but yield to better days,
 To those fam'd days when great Alcides rose, 255
 And Eurytus, who bade the gods be foes:
 (Vain Eurytus, whose art became his crime,
 Swept from the earth he perish'd in his prime;

V. 249. *Should a whole host at once discharge the bow,
 My well-aim'd shaft with death prevents the foe.*]

There is an ambiguity in the original, and it may imply either, that if Ulysses and his friends were at the same time to aim their arrows against an enemy, his arrow would fly with more certainty and expedition than that of his companions: or that if his enemies had bent all their bows at once against him, yet his shaft would reach his adversary before they could discharge their arrows. Eustathius follows the former, Dacier the latter interpretation. And certainly the latter argues the greater intrepidity and presence of mind: it shews Ulysses in the extremity of danger capable of acting with calmness and serenity, and shooting with the same certainty and steadiness, though multitudes of enemies endanger his life. I have followed this explanation, as it is nobler, and shews Ulysses to be a consummate hero.

V. 257. *Vain Eurytus* ———] This Eurytus was king of Oechalia, famous for his skill in archery; he proposed his daughter Iole in marriage to any person that could conquer him at the exercise of the bow. Later writers differ from Homer, as Eustathius observes, concerning Eurytus. They write that Hercules overcame him, and he denying his daughter, was slain, and his daughter made captive by

Sudden th' irremeable way he trod,
 Who boldly durst defy the bowyer-god.) 260
 In fighting fields as far the spear I throw,
 As flies an arrow from the well drawn bow.
 Sole in the race the contest I decline,
 Stiff are my weary joints, and I resign
 By storms and hunger worn: age well may fail, 265
 When storms and hunger both at once assail.

Hercules: whereas Homer writes that he was killed by Apollo, that is, died a sudden death, according to the import of that expression. The ancients differ much about Œchalia; some place it in Eubœa, and some in Messenia, of which opinion is Pausanias. But Homer in the Iliad places it in Thessaly: for he mentions with it Tricca and Ithomè, which, as Dacier observes, were cities of Thessaly.

V. 263. *Sole in the race the contest I decline.*] This is directly contrary to his challenge in the beginning of the speech, where he mentions the race amongst the other games. How then is this difference to be reconciled? Very naturally. Ulysses speaks with a generous warmth, and is transported with anger in the beginning of his oration: here the heat of it is cooled, and consequently reason takes place, and he has time to reflect, that a man so disabled by calamities is not an equal match for a younger and less fatigued antagonist. This is an exact representation of human nature; when our passions remit, the vehemence of our speech remits; at first he speaks like a man in anger, here like the wise Ulysses.

It is observable that Ulysses all along maintains a decency and reverence towards the gods, even while his anger seems to be master over his reason; he gives Eurytus as an example of the just vengeance of heaven, and shews himself in a very opposite light: he is so far from contending with the gods, that he allows himself to be inferior to some other heroes: an instance of modesty.

V. 265. — — — — *age well may fail,*

When storms and hunger ————]

This passage appears to me to refer to the late storms and shipwreck,

Abash'd, the numbers hear the godlike man,
Till great Alcinous mildly thus began.

Well hast thou spoke, and well thy gen'rous tongue
With decent pride refutes a public wrong: 270
Warm are thy words, but warm without offence;
Fear only fools, secure in men of sense:
Thy worth is known. Then hear our country's claim,
And bear to heroes our heroic fame; •

and the long abstinence Ulysses suffered in sailing from Calypso to the Phæacian Island; for when Nausicaa found him, he was almost dead with hunger, as appears from the sixth of the *Odyssey*. Dacier is of a different opinion, and thinks it relates to his abstinence and shipwreck upon his leaving Circe, before he came to Calypso. This seems very improbable; for Ulysses had lived seven years with that goddess in great affluence, and consequently must be supposed to have recruited his loss of strength in so long a time, and with the particular care of a goddess: besides Alcinous was acquainted with his late shipwreck, and his daughter Nausicaa was in some degree witness to it: is it not therefore more probable that he should refer to this latter incident, than speak of a calamity that happened seven years past, to which they were entirely strangers?

Dacier likewise asserts that Eustathius is guilty of a mistake, in making κομιδη or 'provision,' to signify the ship itself; but in reality he makes an evident distinction: *Ου γαρ δια το μη κομιδην εν βρωμασιν εχειν εδαμασθη οδυσσευς τοις κυμασιν, αλλ' οτι εθραυσθη κυμασιν η κομιδην εχουσα ναυς*; 'Ulysses suffered not in the storm because he had no provisions to eat, but because the ship that bore the provisions was broken by the storm;' which shews a wide difference between the vessel and the provisions: so that the expression really implies that the vessel was broken, but Eustathius is far from affirming that κομιδη and ναυς (except in such an improper sense) have the same signification.

Book VIII. HOMER's ODYSSEY. 357

In distant realms our glorious deeds display, 275
 Repeat them frequent in the genial day;
 When bless'd with ease thy woes and wand'rings end,
 Teach them thy consort, bid thy sons attend;
 How lov'd of Jove he crown'd our sires with praise,
 How we their offspring dignify our race. 280

Let other realms the deathful gauntlet wield,
 Or boast the glories of th' athletic field;
 We in the course unrivall'd speed display,
 Or through cærulean billows plough the way,
 To dress, to dance, to sing our sole delight, 285
 The feast or bath by day, and love by night:
 Rise then, ye skill'd in measures; let him bear
 Your fame to men that breathe a distant air:
 And faithful say, to you the pow'rs belong
 To race, to sail, to dance, to chant the song. 290

V. 275, *In distant realms our glorious deeds display.*] From this extravagant preface, it might be imagined that Alcinous was king of a nation of heroes: whereas when he comes to explain the excellence of his subjects, he has scarce any thing to boast of that is manly; they spend an idle life in singing, dancing, and feasting. Thus the poet all along writes consistently: we may know the Phæacians by their character, which is always to be voluptuous, or, as Horace expresses it,

— — — — — Alcinoïque
 In cute curandâ plus æquo operata juvenus.

And Eustathius rightly observes that the poet does not teach that we ought to live such lives, but only relates historically what lives were led by the Phæacians; he describes them as a contemptible people, and consequently proposes them as objects of our scorn, not imitation.

But, herald, to the palace swift repair,
And the soft lyre to grace our pastimes bear.

Swift at the word, obedient to the king
The herald flies the tuneful lyre to bring.
Up rose nine seniors, chosen to survey 295
The future games, the judges of the day:
With instant care they mark a spacious round,
And level for the dance th' allotted ground;
The herald bears the lyre: intent to play,
The bard advancing meditates the lay, 300
Skill'd in the dance, till youths, a blooming band,
Graceful before the heav'nly minstrel stand;

V. 301. *Skill'd in the dance* ———] I beg leave to translate Dacier's annotation upon this passage, and to offer a remark upon it. This description, says that lady, is remarkable, not because the dancers moved to the sound of the harp and the song; for in this there is nothing extraordinary; but in that they danced, if I may so express it, an history; that is, by their gestures and movements they expressed what the music of the harp and voice described, and the dance was a representation of what was the subject of the poet's song. Homer only says they danced divinely, according to the obvious meaning of the words. I fancy Madam Dacier would have forbore her observation, if she had reflected upon the nature of the song to which the Phæacians danced: it was an intrigue between Mars and Venus; and they being taken in some very odd postures, she must allow that these dancers represented some very odd gestures, (or movements as she expresses it) if they were now dancing an history, that is acting in their motions what was the subject of the song. But I submit to the judgment of the ladies, and shall only add, that this is an instance how a critical eye can see some things in an author, that were never intended by him; though to do her justice she borrowed the general remark from Eustathius.

Light-bounding from the earth, at once they rise,
 Their feet half-viewless quiver in the skies :
 Ulysses gaz'd, astonish'd to survey 305
 The glancing splendours as their sandals play.
 Meantime the bard, alternate to the strings,
 The loves of Mars and Cytherea sings ;

The words *μαρμαρυγας Σηαιτο ποδων* are very expressive, they represent the quick glancings of their feet in the dance, ' *Motus pedum coruscans;*' or

' The glancing splendors as their sandals play.'

V. 307. — — *the bard, alternate to the strings,
 The loves of Mars and Cytherea sings.]*

The reader may be pleased to look back to the beginning of the book for a general vindication of this story. Scaliger in his *Poeticks* prefers the song of Iōpas in Virgil, to this of Demodocus in Homer; ' *Demodocus deorum canit fœditates, noster Iōpas res rege dignas.*' Monsieur Dacier in his *Annotations* upon Aristotle's *Poeticks* refutes the objection. The song of Demodocus, says he, is as well adapted to the inclinations and relish of the Phæacians, as the song of Iōpas is to queen Dido. It may indeed be questioned whether the subject of Virgil's song be well chosen, and whether the deepest points of philosophy were entirely proper to be sung to a queen and her female attendants.

' The various labours of the wand'ring moon,
 And whence proceed th' eclipses of the sun,
 Th' original of men and beasts, and whence
 The rains arise, and fires their warmth dispense, &c.'

DRYDEN.

Nor is Virgil more reserved than Homer: in the fourth *Georgic* he introduces a nymph, who in the court of the goddess Cyrenè with her nymphs about her, sings this very song of Demodocus.

How the stern god, enamour'd with her charms,
 Clasp'd the gay panting goddess in his arms, 310
 By bribes seduc'd: and how the sun, whose eye
 Views the broad heav'ns, disclos'd the lawless joy.

' To these Clymène the sweet theft declares
 Of Mars; and Vulcan's unavailing cares;
 And all the rapes of gods, and every love
 From ancient Chaos down to youthful Jove.' DRYDEN,

So that, if either of the poets are to be blamed, it is certainly Virgil: but neither of them, adds that critic, are culpable: Virgil understood what a chaste queen ought to hear before strangers, and what women might say when alone among themselves: thus to the queen he sings a philosophical song, but the intrigues of Mars and Venus among nymphs when they were alone.

Plutarch vindicates this story of Homer: there is a way of teaching by mute actions, and those very fables that have given most offence, furnish us with useful contemplations: thus in the story of Mars and Venus, some have by an unnecessary violence endeavoured to reduce it into allegory: when Venus is in conjunction with the star called Mars, they have an adulterous influence, but time, or the sun, reveals it. But the poet himself far better explains the meaning of his fable, for he teaches that light music and wanton songs debauch the manners, and incline men to an unmanly way of living in luxury and wantonness.

In short, Virgil mentions this story, Ovid translates it, Plutarch commends it, and Scaliger censures it. I will add the judgment of a late writer, Monsieur Boileau, concerning Scaliger, in his notes upon Longinus. ' That proud scholar,' says he, ' intending to erect altars to Virgil, as he expresses it, speaks of Homer too profanely; but it is in a book which he calls in part hypercritical, to shew that he transgressed the bounds of true criticism: that piece was a dishonour to Scaliger, and he fell into such gross errors, that he drew upon him the ridicule of all men of letters, and even of his own son.'

Book VIII. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 361

Stung to the soul, indignant through the skies
 To his black forge vindictive Vulcan flies;
 Arriv'd, his sinewy arms incessant place 315
 Th' eternal anvil on the massy base.

A wond'rous net he labours, to betray
 The wanton lovers, as entwin'd they lay,
 Indissolubly strong! Then instant bears
 To his immortal dome the finish'd snares. 320

Above, below, around, with art disspread,
 The sure inclosure folds the genial bed;
 Whose texture ev'n the search of gods deceives,
 Thin as the filmy threads the spider weaves.
 Then, as withdrawing from the starry bow'rs, 325
 He feigns a journey to the Lemnian shores,
 His fav'rite isle! Observant Mars descries
 His wish'd recess, and to the goddess flies;
 He glows, he burns: the fair-hair'd queen of love
 Descends smooth gliding from the courts of Jove,
 Gay blooming in full charms: her hand he press'd
 With eager joy, and with a sigh address'd.

Come, my belov'd! and taste the soft delights:
 Come, to repose the genial bed invites:
 Thy absent spouse, neglectful of thy charms, 335
 Prefers his barb'rous Sintians to thy arms!

V.336. *Prefers his barb'rous Sintians to thy arms!*] The Sintians were the inhabitants of Lemnos, by origin Thracians: Homer calls them barbarous of speech, because their language was a corruption of

Then, nothing loath, th' enamour'd fair he led,
 And sunk transported on the conscious bed.
 Down rush'd the toils, inwrapping as they lay,
 The careless lovers in their wanton play: 340
 In vain they strive, th' intangling snares deny
 (Inextricably firm) the power to fly:
 Warn'd by the god who sheds the golden day,
 Stern Vulcan homeward treads the starry way:
 Arriv'd, he sees, he grieves, with rage he burns; 345
 Full horrible he roars, his voice all heav'n returns:

O Jove, he cry'd, oh all ye pow'rs above,
 See the lewd dalliance of the queen of love!

the Greek, Asiatic, and Thracian. But there is a concealed raillery in the expression, and Mars ridicules the ill taste of Vulcan for leaving so beautiful a goddess to visit his rude and barbarous Sintians. The poet calls Lemnos the favourite isle of Vulcan; this alludes to the subterraneous fires frequent in that island, and he is feigned to have his forge there, as the god of fire. This is likewise the reason why he is said to fall into the island Lemnos when Jupiter threw him from heaven. DACIER.

V. 348. *See the lewd dalliance of the queen of love!* The original seems to be corrupted: were it to be translated according to the present editions, it must be, 'See the ridiculous deeds of Venus.' I conceive, that few husbands who should take their spouses in such circumstances, would have any great appetite to laugh; neither is such an interpretation consonant to the words immediately following *ἐπισκία*. It is therefore very probable that the verse was originally

Δεῦθ' ἵνα ἐργ' ἀγελαστοῖα καὶ ἐκ ἐπισκία ἰδῇσθε.

'Come, ye gods, behold the sad and unsufferable deeds of Venus;' and this agrees with the tenour of Vulcan's behaviour in this comedy, who has not the least disposition to be merry with his brother deities.

Me, awkward me, she scorns; and yields her charms
 To that fair letcher, the strong god of arms. 350
 If I am lame, that stain my natal hour
 By fate impos'd; such me my parent bore:
 Why was I born? See how the wanton lies!
 O sight tormenting to an husband's eyes!
 But yet I trust, this once ev'n Mars would fly 355
 His fair-one's arms—he thinks her, once, too nigh.
 But there remain, ye guilty, in my pow'r,
 Till Jove refunds his shameless daughter's dow'r.

V. 358. *Till Jove refunds his shameless daughter's dow'r.*] I doubt not but this was the usage of antiquity: it has been observed that the bridegroom made presents to the father of the bride, which were called *ενδα*; and if she was afterwards false to his bed, this dowry was restored by the father to the husband. Besides this restitution, there seems a pecuniary mulct to have been paid, as appears evident from what follows:

' — — — — the god of arms
 Must pay the penalty for lawless charms.'

Homer in this, as in many other places, seems to allude to the laws of Athens, where death was the punishment of adultery. Pausanias relates, that Draco the Athenian lawgiver granted impunity to any person that took revenge upon an adulterer. Such also was the institution of Solon; 'If any one seize an adulterer, let him use him as he pleases:' *εαν τις μοιχον λαβη, οτι αν βεληται χρησηθαι*. And thus Eratosthenes answered a person who begged his life after he had injured his bed, *εκ εγω σε αποκτενω, αλλ' ο της πατριδος νομος*, 'It is not I who slay thee, but the law of thy country.' But still it was in the power of the injured person to take a pecuniary mulct by way of atonement: for thus the same Eratosthenes speaks in Lysias, *ηντιβολου και ικετευε μη αυτον κλειναι, αλλ' αργυριον παραχασθαι*, 'He entreated me not to take his life, but exact a sum of money.' Nay, such pe-

Too dear I priz'd a fair enchanting face :

Beauty unchaste is beauty in disgrace. 360

Meanwhile the gods the dome of Vulcan throng,
Apollo comes, and Neptune comes along,
With these gay Hermes trod the starry plain;
But modesty withheld the goddess-train.

All heav'n beholds, imprison'd as they lie, 365
And unextinguish'd laughter shakes the sky.

Then mutual, thus they spoke: Behold on wrong
Swift vengeance waits; and art subdues the strong!
Dwells there a god on all th' Olympian brow
More swift than Mars, and more than Vulcan slow?
Yet Vulcan conquers, and the god of arms 371
Must pay the penalty for lawless charms.

nalties were allowed by way of commutation for greater crimes than adultery, as in the case of murder. Iliad IX.

' — — — — If a brother bleed,
On just atonement, we remit the deed:
A sire the slaughter of his son forgives;
The price of blood discharg'd, the murd'rer lives.

V. 367. — — — — Behold on wrong
Swift vengeance waits ———]

Plutarch, in his dissertation upon reading the poets, quotes this as an instance of Homer's judgment, in closing a ludicrous scene with decency and instruction. He artfully inserts a sentence by which he discovers his own judgment, and lets the reader into the moral of his fables; by this conduct he makes even the representation of evil actions useful, by shewing the shame and detriment they draw upon those who are guilty of them.

Thus serious they: but he who gilds the skies,
The gay Apollo thus to Hermes cries. 374

Wouldst thou enchain'd like Mars, oh Hermes, lie,
And bear the shame like Mars, to share the joy?

O envy'd shame! (the smiling youth rejoin'd)
Add thrice the chains, and thrice more firmly bind;
Gaze all ye gods, and ev'ry goddess gaze,
Yet eager would I bless the sweet disgrace. 380

Loud laugh the rest, ev'n Neptune laughs aloud,
Yet sues importunate to loose the god:
And free, he cries, oh Vulcan! free from shame
Thy captives; I ensure the penal claim.

Will Neptune (Vulcan then) the faithless trust?
He suffers who gives surety for th' unjust: 386

V. 382. *Neptune sues to loose the god.*] It may be asked why Neptune in particular interests himself in the deliverance of Mars, rather than the other gods? Dacier confesses she can find no reason for it; but Eustathius is of opinion, that Homer ascribes it to that god out of decency, and deference to his superior majesty and eminence amongst the other deities: it is suitable to the character of that most ancient, and consequently honourable god, to interrupt such an indecent scene of mirth, which is not so becoming his personage, as those more youthful deities Apollo and Mercury. Besides, it agrees well with Neptune's gravity to be the first who is first mindful of friendship; so that what is here said of Neptune is not accidental, but spoken judiciously by the poet in honour of that deity.

V. 386. *He suffers who gives surety for th' unjust.*] This verse is very obscure, and made still more obscure by the explanations of critics. Some think it implies, that it is wicked to be surety for a wicked person; and therefore Neptune should not give his promise for Mars thus taken in adultery. Some take it generally: suretyship is

But say, if that lewd scandal of the sky
 To liberty restor'd, perfidious fly;
 Say, wilt thou bear the mulct? He instant cries,
 The mulct I bear, if Mars perfidious flies. 390

To whom appeas'd: No more I urge delay;
 When Neptune sues, my part is to obey.
 Then to the snares his force the god applies;
 They burst; and Mars to Thrace indignant flies:
 To the soft Cyprian shores the goddess moves, 395
 To visit Paphos and her blooming groves,

detrimental, and it is the lot of unhappy men to be sureties; the words then are to be construed in the following order, *δειλαι τοι εἶναι, και δειλων ανδρων εἰγυαασθαι*. 'Sponsiones sunt infelices, et hominum est infeliciū sponsiones dare.' Others understand it very differently, viz. to imply that the sureties of men of inferior condition should be to men of inferior condition; then the sentence will bear this import: if Mars, says Vulcan, refuses to discharge the penalty, how shall I compel Neptune to pay it, who is so greatly my superior? And therefore adds by way of sentence, that the sponsor ought to be of the same station with the person to whom he become surety; or in Latin, 'Simplicium hominum simplices esse debent sponsores.' I have followed Plutarch, who, in his banquet of the seven wise men, explains it to signify that it is dangerous to be surety for a wicked person, according to the ancient sentence, *εἰγυα παρα δ' αρα*. 'Loss follows suretyship.' Agreeably to the opinion of a much wiser person, 'He that is surety for a stranger shall smart for it; and he that hateth suretyship is sure.' Prov. xi. 15.

V. 394. — — — *Mars to Thrace indignant flies:*
To the soft Cyprian shores the goddess moves.]

There is a reason for this particularity: the Thracians were a warlike people; the poet therefore sends the god of war thither: and the people of Cyprus being effeminate, and addicted to love and pleasures,

Where to the pow'r an hundred altars rise,
 And breathing odours scent the balmy skies,
 Conceal'd she bathes in consecrated bow'rs,
 The graces unguents shed, ambrosial show'rs, 400
 Unguents that charm the gods! she last assumes
 Her wond'rous robes; and full the goddess blooms.

Thus sung the bard: Ulysses hears with joy,
 And loud applauses rend the vaulted sky. 404

Then to the sports his sons the king commands,
 Each blooming youth before the monarch stands,
 In dance unmatch'd! A wond'rous ball is brought,
 (The work of Polybus, divinely wrought)
 This youth with strength enormous bids it fly,
 And bending backward whirls it to the sky; 410

he feigns the recess of the goddess of love to have been in that island. It is further observable, that he barely mentions the retreat of Mars, but dwells more largely upon the story of Venus. The reason is, the Phæacians had no delight in the god of war, but the soft description of Venus better suited with their inclinations. EUSTATHIUS.

V. 410. *And bending backward whirls it to the sky.*] This is a literal translation of ἰδυθεῖς ὀπισθῶ; and it gives us a lively image of a person in the act of throwing towards the skies. Eustathius is most learnedly trifling about this exercise of the ball, which was called αὐρανα, or aerial; it was a kind of dance, and while they sprung from the ground to catch the ball, they played with their feet in the air after the manner of dancers. He reckons up several other exercises at the ball, ἀπορραξίς, φαεινίδα, ἐπισκυρῶ, and Σεμεανστέρις; and explains them all largely. Homer seems to oppose this aerial dance to the common one, ποτὶ χθονί, or 'on the ground,' which appears to be added to make an evident distinction between the sports; otherwise it is unnecessary; and to dance upon the ground is implied in ὠρχεσθην, for how should a dance be performed but upon the ground?

His brother springing with an active bound,
 At distance intercepts it from the ground :
 The ball dismiss'd, in dance they skim the strand,
 Turn and return, and scarce imprint the sand.
 Th' assembly gazes with astonish'd eyes, 415
 And send in shouts applauses to the skies.

Then thus Ulysses: Happy king, whose name
 The brightest shines in all the rolls of fame :
 In subjects happy ! with surprise I gaze; 419
 Thy praise was just ; their skill transcends thy praise.

Pleas'd with his people's fame the monarch hears,
 And thus benevolent accosts the peers.
 Since wisdom's sacred guidance he pursues,
 Give to the stranger-guest a stranger's dues:
 Twelve princes in our realm dominion share, 425
 O'er whom supreme, imperial pow'r I bear :
 Bring gold, a pledge of love ; a talent bring,
 A vest, a robe ; and imitate your king :

V. 420. *Thy praise was just* ———] The original says, You promised that your subjects were excellent dancers, ἀπειλησας, that is, 'threatened.' 'Minans' is used in the same sense by the Latins, as Dacier observes; thus Horace,

' Multa et præclara minantem.'

Eustathius remarks, that the address of Ulysses is very artful, he calls it a seasonable flattery: in reality to excel in dancing, is but to excel in trifles, but in the opinion of Alcinous it was a most noble qualification: Ulysses therefore pleases his vanity by adapting his praise to his notions; and that which would have been an affront in some nations, is esteemed as the highest compliment by Alcinous.

Be swift to give; that he this night may share
 The social feast of joy, with joy sincere. 430
 And thou, Euryalus, redeem thy wrong:
 A gen'rous heart repairs a sland'rous tongue.

Th' assenting peers, obedient to the king,
 In haste their heralds send the gifts to bring.
 Then thus Euryalus: O prince, whose sway 435
 Rules this bless'd realm, repentant I obey!
 Be his this sword, whose blade of brass displays
 A ruddy gleam; whose hilt, a silver blaze;
 Whose ivory sheath inwrought with curious pride,
 Adds graceful terror to the wearer's side. 440

He said, and to his hand the sword consign'd;
 And if, he cry'd, my words affect thy mind,
 Far from thy mind those words, ye whirlwinds, bear,
 And scatter them, ye storms, in empty air!
 Crown, oh ye heav'ns, with joy his peaceful hours,
 And grant him to his spouse and native shores!

And bless'd be thou, my friend, Ulysses cries,
 Crown him with ev'ry joy, ye fav'ring skies;
 To thy calm hours continu'd peace afford,
 And never, never may'st thou want this sword! 450

V. 450. *And never, never may'st thou want this sword!*] It can scarce be imagined how greatly this beautiful passage is misrepresented by Eustathius. He would have it to imply, 'May I never want this sword,' taking *τοῖ* adverbially: the presents of enemies were reckoned fatal; Ulysses therefore, to avert the omen, prays that he may never have occasion to have recourse to this sword of Euryalus, but keep it amongst his treasures as a testimony of this reconciliation.

He said, and o'er his shoulder flung the blade,
Now o'er the earth ascends the evening shade:
The precious gifts th' illustrious heralds bear,
And to the court th' embody'd peers repair.
Before the queen Alcinous' sons unfold 455
The vests, the robes, and heaps of shining gold;
Then to the radiant thrones they move in state:
Aloft, the king in pomp imperial sat.

Thence to the queen. O partner of our reign,
O sole belov'd! command thy menial train 460
A polish'd chest and stately robes to bear,
And healing waters for the bath prepare:
That bath'd, our guest may bid his sorrows cease,
Hear the sweet song, and taste the feast in peace.
A bowl that flames with gold, of wond'rous frame,
Ourself we give, memorial of our name: 466
To raise in off'rings to almighty Jove,
And every god that tread the courts above.

Instant the queen, observant of the king,
Commands her train a spacious vase to bring; 470
The spacious vase with ample streams suffice,
Heap high the wood, and bid the flames arise.

This appears to be a very forced interpretation, and disagreeable to the general import of the rest of the sentence; he addresses to Euryalus, to whom then can this compliment be naturally paid but to Euryalus? 'Thou hast given me a sword,' says he; 'may thy days be so peaceable as never to want it!' This is an instance of the polite address, and the forgiving temper, of Ulysses.

The flames climb round it with a fierce embrace,
 The fuming waters bubble o'er the blaze.
 Herself the chest prepares: in order roll'd 475
 The robes, the vests are rang'd, and heaps of gold:
 And adding a rich dress inwrought with art,
 A gift expressive of her bounteous heart,
 Thus spoke to Ithacus: To guard with bands
 Insolvable these gifts, thy care demands: 480
 Lest, in thy slumbers on the wat'ry main,
 The hand of rapine make our bounty vain.

Then bending with full force, around he roll'd
 A labyrinth of bands in fold on fold,
 Clos'd with Circæan art. A train attends 485
 Around the bath: the bath the king ascends:

V. 485. *Clos'd with Circæan art.* —] Such passages as these have more of nature than art, and are too narrative, and different from modern ways of speaking, to be capable of much ornament in poetry. Eustathius observes that keys were not in use in these ages, but were afterwards invented by the Lacedæmonians; but they used to bind their carriages with intricate knots. Thus the Gordian knot was famous in antiquity. And this knot of Ulysses became a proverb, to express any insolvable difficulty, ο τε οδυσσεως δεσμος: this is the reason why he is said to have learned it from Circe; it was of great esteem amongst the ancients, and not being capable to be untied by human art, the invention of it is ascribed, not to a man, but to a goddess.

A poet would now appear ridiculous if he should introduce a goddess only to teach a hero such an art, as to tie a knot with intricacy: but we must not judge of what has been, from what now is; customs and arts are never at a stay, and consequently the ideas of customs and arts are as changeable as those arts and customs: this knot in all probability was in as high estimation formerly, as the

(Unlasted joy, since that disastrous hour,
He sail'd ill-fated from Calypso's bow'r)
Where, happy as the gods that range the sky,
He feasted ev'ry sense, with ev'ry joy. 490
He bathes; the damsels with officious toil,
Shed sweets, shed unguents, in a show'r of oil:
Then o'er his limbs a gorgeous robe he spreads,
And to the feast magnificently treads.
Full where the dome its shining valves expands, 495
Nausicaa blooming as a goddess stands,
With wond'ring eyes the hero she survey'd,
And graceful thus began the royal maid.

Hail godlike stranger! and when heav'n restores
To thy fond wish thy long-expected shores, 500
This ever grateful in remembrance bear,
To me thou ow'st, to me, the vital air.

O royal maid, Ulysses straight returns,
Whose worth the splendours of thy race adorns, 505
So may dread Jove (whose arm in vengeance forms
The writhen bolt, and blackens heav'n with storms)
Restore me safe, through weary wand'rings tost,
To my dear country's ever pleasing coast,
As while the spirit in this bosom glows,
To thee, my goddess, I address my vows; 510

finest watch-work or machines are at this day; and were a person famed for an uncommon skill in such works, it would be no absurdity in the language of poetry, to ascribe his knowledge in them to the assistance of a deity.

My life, thy gift I boast! He said, and sat,
 Fast by Alcinous on a throne of state,
 Now each partakes the feast, the wine prepares,
 Portions the food, and each his portion shares.
 The bard an herald guides: the gazing throng 515
 Pay low obeisance as he moves along:
 Beneath a sculptur'd arch he sits enthron'd,
 The peers encircling form an awful round.
 Then from the chine, Ulysses carves with art
 Delicious food, an honorary part; 520

V. 510. *To thee, my goddess, I address my vows.*] This may seem an extravagant compliment, especially in the mouth of the wise Ulysses, and rather profane than polite. Dacier commends it as the highest piece of address and gallantry; but perhaps it may want explanation to reconcile it to decency. Ulysses only speaks comparatively, and with relation to that one action of her saving his life: 'As therefore, says he, I owe my thanks to the heavens for giving me life originally, so I ought to pay my thanks to thee for preserving it; thou hast been to me as a deity. To preserve a life, is in one sense to give it.' If this appears not to soften the expression sufficiently, it may be ascribed to an overflow of gratitude in the generous disposition of Ulysses; he is so touched with the memory of her benevolence and protection, that his soul labours for an expression great enough to represent it, and no wonder if in this struggle of thought, his words fly out into an excessive but laudable boldness.

V. 519. — *From the chine Ulysses carves with art.*] Were this literally to be translated, it would be that Ulysses cut a piece from the chine of the white-toothed boar, round which there was much fat. This looks like burlesque to a person unacquainted with the usages of antiquity: but it was the highest honour that could be paid to Demodocus. The greatest heroes in the Iliad are thus rewarded after victory, and it was esteemed an equivalent for all dangers. So

This, let the master of the lyre receive,
 A pledge of love! 'tis all a wretch can give.
 Lives there a man beneath the spacious skies,
 Who sacred honours to the bard denies?
 The muse the bard inspires, exalts his mind; 525
 The muse indulgent loves th' harmonious kind:
 The herald to his hand the charge conveys,
 Not fond of flatt'ry, nor unpleas'd with praise.
 When now the rage of hunger was allay'd,
 Thus to the lyrist wise Ulysses said, 530
 O more than man! thy soul the muse inspires,
 Or Phœbus animates with all his fires;

that what Ulysses here offers to the poet, is offered out of a particular regard and honour to his poetry.

V. 531. — *Thy soul the muse inspires,
 Or Phœbus animates with all his fires.*]

Ulysses here ascribes the songs of Demodocus to immediate inspiration; and Apollo is made the patron of the poets, as Eustathius observes, because he is the god of prophecy. He adds, that Homer here again represents himself in the person of Demodocus: it is he who wrote the war of Troy with as much faithfulness, as if he had been present at it; it is he who had little or no assistance from former relations of that story, and consequently receives it from Apollo and the muses. This is a secret but artful insinuation that we are not to look upon the Iliad as all fiction and fable, but in general as a real history, related with as much certainty as if the poet had been present at those memorable actions.

Plutarch in his chapter of reading poems admires the conduct of Homer with relation to Ulysses: he diverts Demodocus from idle fables, and gives him a noble theme, the destruction of Troy. Such subjects suit well with the sage character of Ulysses. It is for the

For who by Phœbus uninform'd, could know
 The woe of Greece, and sing so well the woe?
 Just to the tale, as present at the fray, 535
 Or taught the labours of the dreadful day!
 The song recalls past horrors to my eyes,
 And bids proud Ilion from her ashes rise.
 Once more harmonious strike the sounding string,
 Th' Epæan fabric, fram'd by Pallas, sing: 540
 How stern Ulysses, furious to destroy,
 With latent heroes sack'd imperial Troy.
 If faithful thou record the tale of fame,
 The god himself inspires thy breast with flame:
 And mine shall be the task, henceforth to raise 545
 In ev'ry land, thy monument of praise.

Full of the god he rais'd his lofty strain,
 How the Greeks rush'd tumultuous to the main:
 How blazing tents illumin'd half the skies,
 While from the shores the winged navy flies: 550
 How ev'n in Ilion's walls, in deathful bands,
 Came the stern Greeks by Troy's assisting hands:
 All Troy up-heav'd the steed; of diff'ring mind,
 Various the Trojans counsell'd; part consign'd

same reason that he here passes over in silence the amour of Mars and Venus, and commends the song at the beginning of this book, concerning the contention of the worthies before Troy: an instruction, what songs a wise man ought to hear, and that poets should recite nothing but what may be heard by a wise man.

V. 554. *Various the Trojans counsell'd* —] It is observable that the poet gives us only the heads of this song, and though he had an

The monster to the sword, part sentence gave 555
 To plunge it headlong in the whelming wave;
 Th' unwise award to lodge it in the tow'rs,
 An off'ring sacred to th' immortal pow'rs:
 Th' unwise prevail, they lodge it in the walls,
 And by the gods' decree proud Ilion falls; 560
 Destruction enters in the treach'rous wood,
 And vengeful slaughter, fierce for human blood.

opportunity to expatiate and introduce a variety of noble images, by painting the fall of Troy, yet this being foreign to his story, he judiciously restrains his fancy, and passes on to the more immediate actions of the *Odyssey*. Virgil, lib. ii. of his *Æneis*, has translated these verses:

‘Scinditur incertum studia in contraria vulgus:
 At Capys, et quorum melior sententia menti,
 Aut Pelago Danaum insidias suspectaque dona
 Præcipitare jubent, subjectisque urere flammis;
 Aut terebrare cavas uteri et tentare latebras.’

Scaliger prefers these before those of Homer, and says that Homer trifles in describing so particularly the divisions of the Trojan councils: that Virgil chooses to burn the horse, rather than describe it as thrown from the rocks: for how should the Trojans raise it thither? Such objections are scarce worthy of a serious answer, for it is no difficulty to imagine that the same men who heaved this machine into Troy, should be able to raise it upon a rock: and as for the former objection, Virgil recites almost the same divisions in counsel as Homer, nay borrows them, with little variation.

Aristotle observes the great art of Homer, in naturally bringing about the discovery of Ulysses to Alcinous by this song. He calls this a remembrance, that is, when a present object stirs up a past image in the memory, as a picture recalls the figure of an absent friend: thus Ulysses hearing Demodocus sing to the harp his former hardships, breaks out into tears, and these tears bring about his discovery.

He sung the Greeks stern-issuing from the steed,
How Ilion burns, how all her fathers bleed;
How to thy dome, Deiphobus! ascends 565
The Spartan king; how Ithacus attends,
(Horrid as Mars) and how with dire alarms
He fights, subdues: for Pallas strings his arms.

Thus while he sung, Ulysses' griefs renew, 569
Tears bathe his cheeks, and tears the ground bedew:
As some fond matron views in mortal fight
Her husband falling in his country's right:
Frantic through clashing swords she runs, she flies,
As ghastly pale he groans, and faints, and dies;
Close to his breast she grovels on the ground, 575
And bathes with floods of tears the gaping wound;
She cries, she shrieks; the fierce insulting foe
Relentless mocks her violence of woe:
To chains condemn'd, as wildly she deplores;
A widow, and a slave on foreign shores. 580

So from the sluices of Ulysses' eyes
Fast fell the tears, and sighs succeeded sighs:

V. 571. *As some fond matron* —.] This is undoubtedly a very moving and beautiful comparison; but it may be asked if it be proper to compare so great a hero as Ulysses to a woman, the weakness of whose sex justifies her tears? Besides she appears to have a sufficient cause for her sorrows, as being under the greatest calamities; but why should Ulysses weep? Nothing but his valour and success is recorded, and why should this be an occasion of sorrow? Eustathius replies, that they who think that Ulysses is compared to the matron, mistake the point of the comparison: whereas the tears alone of

Conceal'd he griev'd: the king observ'd alone
The silent tear, and heard the secret groan:
Then to the bard aloud: O cease to sing, 585
Dumb be thy voice, and mute the tuneful string:
To ev'ry note his tears responsive flow,
And his great heart heaves with tumultuous woe;
Thy lay too deeply moves: then cease the lay,
And o'er the banquet ev'ry heart be gay: 590
This social right demands: for him the sails
Floating in air, invite th' impelling gales:
His are the gifts of love: the wise and good
Receive the stranger as a brother's blood.

But, friend, discover faithful what I crave, 595
Artful concealment ill becomes the brave:
Say what thy birth, and what the name you bore,
Impos'd by parents in the natal hour?
(For from the natal hour distinctive names,
One common right, the great and lowly claims:) 600

Ulysses are intended to be compared to the tears of the matron. It is the sorrow of the two persons, not the persons themselves, that is represented in the comparison. But there appears no sufficient cause for the tears of Ulysses; this objection would not have been made, if the subject of the song had been considered; it sets before his eyes all the calamities of a long war, all the scenes of slaughter of friends and enemies that he had beheld in it: it is also to be remembered, that we have only the abridgment of the song, and yet we see spectacles of horror, blood, and commiseration. Tears discover a tender, not an abject spirit. Achilles is not less a hero for weeping over the ashes of Patroclus, nor Ulysses for lamenting the calamities and deaths of thousands of his friends.

Say from what city, from what regions tost,
And what inhabitants those regions boast?
So shalt thou instant reach the realm assign'd,
In wond'rous ships self-mov'd, instinct with mind;
No helm secures their course, no pilot guides; 605
Like man intelligent, they plough the tides,
Conscious of every coast, and every bay,
That lies beneath the sun's all-seeing ray;
Though clouds and darkness veil th' encumber'd sky,
Fearless through darkness and through clouds they fly:

V. 604. *In wond'rous ships self-mov'd, instinct with mind.*] There is not a passage that more outrages all the rules of credibility than the description of these ships of Alcinous. The poet inserts these wonders only to shew the great dexterity of the Phæacians in navigation; and indeed it was necessary to be very full in the description of their skill, who were to convey Ulysses home in despite of the very god of the ocean. It is for the same reason that they are described as sailing almost invisibly, to escape the notice of that god. Antiquity animated every thing in poetry; thus Argo is said to have had a mast made of Dodonæan oak, endued with the faculty of speech. But this is defending one absurdity, by instancing in a fable equally absurd; all that can be said in defence of it is, that such extravagant fables were believed, at least by the vulgar, in former ages; and consequently might be introduced without blame in poetry; if so, by whom could a boast of this nature be better made, than by a vain Phæacian? Besides these extravagancies let Ulysses into the humour of the Phæacians, and in the following books he adapts his story to it, and returns fable for fable. It must likewise certainly be a great encouragement to Ulysses to find himself in such hands as could so easily restore him to his country: for it was natural to conclude, that though Alcinous was guilty of great amplification, yet that his subjects were very expert navigators.

Though tempests rage, though rolls the swelling main,
 The seas may roll, the tempests rage in vain;
 Ev'n the stern god that o'er the waves presides,
 Safe as they pass, and safe repass the tides,
 With fury burns; while careless they convey 615
 Promiscuous every guest to every bay.
 These ears have heard my royal sire disclose
 A dreadful story big with future woes,
 How Neptune rag'd, and how, by his command,
 Firm rooted in a surge a ship should stand 620

V. 619. — — — — — *How, by his command,
 Firm rooted in the surge a ship should stand.]*

The ancients, as Eustathius observes, mark these verses with an obelisk and asterism. The obelisk shewed that they judged what relates to the oracle was misplaced, the asterism denoted that they thought the verses very beautiful. For they thought it not probable that Alcinous would have called to memory this prediction and the menace of Neptune, and yet persisted to conduct to his own country the enemy of that deity: whereas if this oracle be supposed to be forgotten, by Alcinous, (as it will, if these verses be taken away) then there will be an appearance of truth, that he who was a friend to all strangers, should be persuaded to land so great and worthy an hero as Ulysses in his own dominions, and therefore they reject them to the 13th of the Odyssey. But, as Eustathius observes, Alcinous immediately subjoins,

‘ But this the gods may frustrate or fulfil,
 As suits the purpose of th’ eternal will.’

And therefore the verses may be very proper in this book, for Alcinous believes that the gods might be prevailed upon not to fulfil this denunciation. It has been likewise remarked that the conduct of Alcinous is very justifiable: the Phæacians had been warned by an oracle,

A monument of wrath: how mound on mound
Should bury these proud tow'rs beneath the ground.

that an evil threatened them for the care they should shew to a stranger: yet they forbear not to perform an act of piety to Ulysses, being persuaded that men ought to do their duty, and trust the issue to the goodness of the gods. This will seem to be more probable, if we remember Alcinous is ignorant that Ulysses is the person intended by the prediction, so that he is not guilty of a voluntary opposition to the gods, but really acts with piety in assisting his guest, and only complies with the common laws of hospitality.

It is but a conjecture, yet it is not without probability, that there was a rock which looked like a vessel, in the entrance of the haven of the Phæacians, the fable may be built upon this foundation, and because it was environed by the ocean, the transformation might be ascribed to the god of it.

V. 621. — — — — — *How mound on mound*

Should bury these proud tow'rs beneath the ground.]

The Greek word is *αμφικαλυσειν*, which does not necessarily imply that the city should be buried actually, but that a mountain should surround it, or cover it round; and in the thirteenth book we find that when the ship was transformed into a rock, the city continues out of danger. Eustathius is fully of opinion, that the city was threatened to be overwhelmed by a mountain; the poet, says he, invents this fiction to prevent posterity from searching after this isle of the Phæacians, and to preserve his story from detection of falsification; after the same manner as he introduces Neptune and the rivers of Troy, bearing away the wall which the Greeks had raised as a fortification before their navy. But Dacier in the omissions which she inserts at the end of the second volume of her *Odyssey*, is of a contrary opinion, for the mountain is not said to cover the city, but to threaten to cover it: as appears from the thirteenth book of the *Odyssey*, where Alcinous commands a sacrifice to the gods to avert the execution of this denunciation.

But the difference in reality is small, the city is equally threatened

But this the gods may frustrate or fulfil,
 As suits the purpose of th' eternal will.
 But say through what waste regions hast thou stray'd,
 What customs noted, and what coasts survey'd? 626
 Possess'd by wild barbarians fierce in arms,
 Or men, whose bosom tender pity warms?
 Say why the fate of Troy awak'd thy cares, 629
 Why heav'd thy bosom, and why flow'd thy tears?
 Just are the ways of heav'n: from heav'n proceed
 The woes of man; heav'n doom'd the Greeks to bleed,
 A theme of future song! Say then if slain
 Some dear-lov'd brother press'd the Phrygian plain?
 Or bled some friend, who bore a brother's part, 635
 And claim'd by merit, not by blood, the heart?

to be buried, as the vessel to be transformed; and therefore Alcinoüs might pronounce the same fate to both, since both were threatened equally by the prediction: it was indeed impossible for him to speak after any other manner, for he only repeats the words of the oracle, and cannot foresee that the sacrifice of the Phæacians would appease the anger of Neptune.

V. 635. *Or bled some friend, who bore a brother's part,
 And claim'd by merit, not by blood, the heart?*

This excellent sentence of Homer at once guides us in the choice, and instructs us in the regard, that is to be paid to the person of a friend. If it be lawful to judge of a man from his writings, Homer had a soul susceptible of real friendship, and was a lover of sincerity. It would be endless to take notice of every casual instruction inserted¹⁷ in the *Odyssey*; but such sentences shew Homer to have been a man of an amiable character as well as excellent in poetry: the great abhorrence he had of lies cannot be more strongly expressed than in those two passages of the ninth *Iliad*, and in the fourteenth *Odyssey*:

in the first of which he makes the man of the greatest soul, Achilles, bear testimony to his aversion of them; and in the latter declares, that 'the poorest man, though compelled by the utmost necessity, ought not to stoop to such a practice.' In this place he shews that worth creates a kind of relation, and that we are to look upon a worthy friend as a brother.

This book takes up the whole thirty-third day, and part of the evening; for the council opens in the morning, and at sun-setting the Phæacians return to the palace from the games; after which Ulysses bathes and sups, and spends some time of the evening in discoursing, and hearing the songs of Demodocus. Then Alcinous requests him to relate his own story, which he begins in the next book, and continues it through the four subsequent books of the Odyssey.

THE
NINTH BOOK
OF THE
ODYSSEY.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE ADVENTURES OF THE CICONI, LOTOPHAGI,
AND CYCLOPS.

ULYSSES begins the relation of his adventures; how after the destruction of Troy, he with his companions made an incursion on the Ciconi, by whom they were repulsed; and meeting with a storm, were driven to the coast of the Lotophagi. From thence they sailed to the land of the Cyclops, whose manners and situation are particularly characterised. The giant Polyphemus and his cave described; the usage Ulysses and his companions met with there; and lastly, the method and artifice by which he escaped.

THE
ODYSSEY.

BOOK IX.*

THEN thus Ulysses. Thou, whom first in sway,
As first in virtue, these thy realms obey;
How sweet the products of a peaceful reign!
The heav'n-taught poet, and enchanting strain;

* As we are now come to the episodical part of the *Odyssey*, it may be thought necessary to speak something of the nature of episodes.

As the action of the epic is always one, entire, and great action; so the most trivial episodes must be so interwoven with it, as to be necessary parts, or convenient, as Mr. Dryden observes, to carry on the main design; either so necessary, as without them the poem must be imperfect, or so convenient, that no others can be imagined more suitable to the place in which they stand: there is nothing to be left void in a firm building, even the cavities ought not to be filled up with rubbish destructive to the strength of it, but with materials of the same kind, though of less pieces, and fitted to the main fabric.

Aristotle tells us, that what is comprehended in the first platform of the fable is proper, the rest is episode: let us examine the *Odyssey* by this rule: the ground-work of the poem is, a prince absent from his country several years, Neptune hinders his return, yet at last he breaks through all obstacles, and returns, where he finds great disorders, the authors of which he punishes, and restores peace to his kingdoms. This is all that is essential to the model; this the poet is

How goodly seems it, ever to employ
Man's social days in union and in joy;

extended by probable circumstances.' They are part of an action, for they are not added to the principal action, but only dilate and amplify that principal action: thus the poet to shew the sufferings of Ulysses brings in the several episodes of Polyphemus, Scylla, the Syrens, &c. But why should the words, 'extended by probable circumstances,' enter the definition? Because the sufferings of Ulysses are proposed in the model of the fable in general only, but by relating the circumstances, the manner how he suffered is discovered; and this connects it with the principal action, and shews very evidently the necessary relation the episode bears to the main design of the Odyssey. What I have said, I hope, plainly discovers the difference between the episodic and principal action, as well as the nature of episodes. See Bossu more largely upon this subject.

V. 3. *How sweet the products of a peaceful reign, &c.*] This passage has given great joy to the critics, as it has afforded them the ill-natured pleasure of railing, and the satisfaction of believing they have found a fault in a good writer. It is fitter, say they, for the mouth of Epicurus than for the sage Ulysses, to extol the pleasures of feasting and drinking in this manner: he whom the poet proposes as the standard of human wisdom, says Rapin, suffers himself to be made drunk by the Phæacians. But it may rather be imagined, that the critic was not very sober when he made the reflection; for there is not the least appearance of a reason for that imputation. Plato indeed in his third book de Repub. writes, that what Ulysses here speaks is no very proper example of temperance; but every body knows that Plato, with respect to Homer, wrote with great partiality. Athenæus in his twelfth book gives us the following interpretation. Ulysses accommodates his discourse to the present occasion; he in appearance approves of the voluptuous lives of the Phæacians, and having heard Alcinous before say, that feasting and singing, &c. was their supreme delight; he by a seasonable flattery seems to comply with their inclinations: it being the most proper method to attain his desires of being conveyed to his own country. He compares Ulysses to

The plenteous board high-heap'd with cates divine,
And o'er the foaming bowl the laughing wine! 10

the polypus, which is fabled to assume the colour of every rock to which he approaches: thus Sophocles,

Νοεὶ πρὸς ἀνδρὶ σάμα Παλῦπῃ, ὅπως
Πετρα τραπέσθαι γνησιῶ φρονήματι.

That is, 'In your accesses to mankind observe the polypus, and adapt yourself to the humour of the person to whom you apply.' Eustathius observes that this passage has been condemned, but he defends it after the very same way with Athenæus.

It is not impossible but that there may be some compliance with the nature and manners of the Phæacians, especially because Ulysses is always described as an artful man, not without some mixture of dissimulation: but it is no difficult matter to take the passage literally, and to give it an irreproachable sense. Ulysses had gone through innumerable calamities, he had lived to see a great part of Europe and Asia laid desolate by a bloody war; and after so many troubles, he arrives among a nation that was unacquainted with all the miseries of war, where all the people were happy, and passed their lives with ease and pleasures: this calm life fills him with admiration, and he artfully praises what he found praise-worthy in it; namely, the entertainments and music, and passes over the gallantries of the people, as Dacler observes, without any mention. Maximus Tyrius fully vindicates Homer. It is my opinion, says that author, that the poet, by representing these guests in the midst of their entertainments, delighted with the song and music, intended to recommend a more noble pleasure than eating and drinking, such a pleasure as a wise man may imitate, by approving the better part, and rejecting the worse, and choosing to please the ear rather than the belly. 12 Dissert.

If we understand the passage otherwise, the meaning may be this. I am persuaded, says Ulysses, that the most agreeable end which a king can propose, is to see a whole nation in universal joy, when music and feasting are in every house, when plenty is on every table,

Amid these joys, why seeks thy mind to know
 Th' unhappy series of a wand'rer's woe;
 Remembrance sad, whose image to review,
 Alas! must open all my wounds anew?
 And oh, what first, what last shall I relate, 15
 Of woes unnumber'd sent by heav'n and fate?

Know first the man (though now a wretch distress'd)
 Who hopes thee, monarch, for his future guest.
 Behold Ulysses! no ignoble name,
 Earth sounds my wisdom, and high heav'n my fame.

and wines to entertain every guest: this to me appears a state of the greatest felicity.

In this sense Ulysses pays Alcinous a very agreeable compliment; as it is certainly the most glorious aim of a king to make his subjects happy, and diffuse an universal joy through his dominions: he must be a rigid censor indeed who blames such pleasures as these, which have nothing contrary in them to virtue and strict morality; especially as they here bear a beautiful opposition to all the horrors which Ulysses had seen in the wars of Troy, and shew Phæacia as happy as Troy was miserable. I will only add, that this agrees with the oriental way of speaking; and in the poetical parts of the scriptures, the voice of melody, feasting, and dancing, are used to express the happiness of a nation.

V. 19. *Behold Ulysses!* ———] The poet begins with declaring the name of Ulysses: the Phæacians had already been acquainted with it by the song of Demodocus, and therefore it could not fail of raising the utmost attention and curiosity (as Eustathius observes) of the whole assembly, to hear the story of so great a hero. Perhaps it may be thought that Ulysses is ostentatious, and speaks of himself too favourably; but the necessity of it will appear, if we consider that Ulysses had nothing but his personal qualifications to engage the Phæacians in his favour. It was therefore requisite to make those qualifications known, and this was not possible to be done but by his

My native soil is Ithaca the fair, 21
Where high Neritus waves his woods in air:

own relation, he being a stranger among strangers. Besides, he speaks before a vain-glorious people, who thought even boasting no fault. It may be questioned whether Virgil be so happy in those respects, when he puts almost the same words into the mouth of Æneas;

‘ Sum pius Æneas, raptos qui ex hoste penates
Classe veho mecum, famâ super æthera notus:’

For his boast contributes nothing to the re-establishment of his affairs, for he speaks to the goddess Venus. Yet Scaliger infinitely prefers Virgil before Homer, though there be no other difference in the words, than ‘ raptos qui ex hoste penates,’ instead of

— — — Ος πασι δολοισιν
Ἀνδρωποισι μελιν. ———

He questions whether subtilties, or δολοι, ever raised any person's glory to the heavens; whereas that is the reward of piety. But the word is to be understood to imply wisdom, and all the stratagems of war, &c. according to the first verse of the Odyssey,

‘ The man for wisdom's various arts renown'd.’

He is not less severe upon the verses immediately preceding. .

Σοι δ' εμα κηδεα θυμος ἐπαίρηται στυγερῆα, &c.

which lines are undoubtedly very beautiful, and admirably express the number of the sufferings of Ulysses; the multitude of them is so great, that they almost confound him; and he seems at a loss where to begin, how to proceed, or where to end; and they agree very well with the proposition in the opening of the Odyssey, which was to relate the sufferings of a brave man. The verses which Scaliger quotes are

‘ Infandum regina jubes renovare dolorem;
Trojânas ut opes, &c.’

Dulichium, Samè, and Zacynthus crown'd
 With shady mountains, spread their isles around.
 (These to the north and night's dark regions run, 25
 Those to Aurora and the rising sun.)
 Low lies our isle, yet bless'd in fruitful stores;
 Strong are her sons, though rocky are her shores;
 And none, ah none so lovely to my sight,
 Of all the lands that heav'n o'erspreads with light! 30

'Omnia sanè non sine suâ divinitate;' and he concludes, that Virgil has not so much imitated Homer, as taught us how Homer ought to have wrote.

V. 21. — — — *Ithaca the fair,*
Where high Neritus, &c.]

Eustathius gives various interpretations of this position of Ithaca; some understand it to signify that it lies low; others explain it to signify that it is of low position, but high with respect to the neighbouring islands; others take *πανυπερίστη* (excellentissima) in another sense to imply the excellence of the country, which, though it lies low, is productive of brave inhabitants, for Homer immediately adds *αγαθή καρποροφῶς*. Strabo gives a different exposition; Ithaca is *χθάμαλη*, as it lies near to the continent, and *πανυπερίστη*, as it is the utmost of all the islands towards the north, *προς ἀρκίον*, for thus *προς βορον* is to be understood. So that Ithaca, adds he, is not of a low situation, but as it lies opposed to the continent, nor the most lofty (*υψηλοῦστη*) but the most extreme of the northern islands; for so *πανυπερίστη* signifies. Dacier differs from Strabo in the explication of *προς γῆν τ' ἡγεῖον τε*, which he believes to mean the south; she applies the words to the east, or south-east, and appeals to the maps which so describe it. It is the most northern of the islands, and joins to the continent of Epirus; it has Dulichium on the east, and on the south Samos and Zacynthus.

In vain Calypso long constrain'd my stay,
 With sweet, reluctant, amorous delay;
 With all her charms as vainly Circe strove,
 And added magic, to secure my love.
 In pomps or joys, the palace or the grot, 35
 My country's image never was forgot,
 My absent parents rose before my sight,
 And distant lay contentment and delight.

Hear then the woes, which mighty Jove ordain'd
 To wait my passage from the Trojan land. 40
 The winds from Ilion to the Cicons' shore,
 Beneath cold Ismarus, our vessels bore.

V. 31. *In vain Calypso* ———] Eustathius observes, that Ulysses repeats his refusal of the goddess Calypso and Circe in the same words, to shew Alcinous, by a secret denial, that he could not be induced to stay from his country, or marry his daughter: he calls Circe *Δολοεσσα*, because she is skilled in magical incantations: he describes Ithaca with all its inconveniencies, to convince Alcinous of his veracity, and that he will not deceive him in other circumstances, when he gives so disadvantageous a character of a country for which he expresses so great a fondness; and lastly, in relating the death of his friends, he seems to be guilty of a tautology, in *Σαυατον τε μορον τε*. But Aulus Gellius gives us the reason of it, 'Atrocitatem rei his idem dicendo auxit, inculcavitque, non igitur illa ejusdem significationis repetitio, ignava et frigida videri debet.'

V. 41. — — — *to the Cicons' shore*.] Here is the natural and true beginning of the *Odyssey*, which comprehends all the sufferings of Ulysses, and these sufferings take their date immediately after his leaving the shores of Troy; from that moment he endeavours to return to his own country, and all the difficulties he meets with in returning, enter into the subject of the poem. But it may then be asked, if the *Odyssey* does not take up the space of ten years, since

We boldly landed on the hostile place,
 And sack'd the city, and destroy'd the race,
 Their wives made captive, their possessions shar'd, 45
 And ev'ry soldier found a like reward.
 I then advis'd to fly; not so the rest,
 Who staid to revel, and prolong the feast:
 The fatted sheep and sable bulls they slay,
 And bowls fly round, and riot wastes the day. 50

Ulysses wastes so many in his return: and is not this contrary to the nature of epic poetry, which is agreed must not at the longest exceed the duration of one year, or rather campaign? The answer is, the poet lets all the time pass which exceeds the bounds of epic action, before he opens the poem; thus Ulysses spends some time before he arrives at the island of Circe, with her he continues one year, and seven with Calypso; he begins artificially at the conclusion of the action, and finds an opportunity to repeat the most considerable and necessary incidents which preceded the opening of the *Odyssey*; by this method he reduces the duration of it into less compass than the space of two months. This conduct is absolutely necessary, for from the time that the poet introduces his hero upon the stage, he ought to continue his action to the very end of it, that he may never afterwards appear idle or out of motion: this is verified in Ulysses; from the moment he leaves the island of Ogygia to the death of the suitors, he is never out of view, never idle; he is always either in action, or preparing for it, till he is re-established in his dominions. If the poet had followed the natural order of the action, he, like Lucan, would not have wrote an epic poem, but a history in verse.

V. 44. *And sack'd the city* —] The poet assigns no reason why Ulysses destroys this city of the Ciconians, but we may learn from the *Iliad* that they were auxiliaries of Troy, book the second.

' With great Euphemus the Ciconians move,
 Sprung from Træzenian Cæus, lov'd of Jove.'

And therefore Ulysses assaults them as enemies. EUSTATHIUS.

Meantime the Cicons, to their holds retir'd,
 Call on the Cicons, with new fury fir'd;
 With early morn the gather'd country swarms,
 And all the continent is bright with arms:
 Thick as the budding leaves or rising flow'rs 55
 O'erspread the land, when spring descends in show'rs:
 All expert soldiers, skill'd on foot to dare,
 Or from the bounding coursers urge the war.
 Now fortune changes (so the fates ordain)
 Our hour was come to taste our share of pain. 60
 Close at the ships the bloody fight began,
 Wounded they wound, and man expires on man.
 Long as the morning sun increasing bright
 O'er heav'n's pure azure spread the growing light,
 Promiscuous death the form of war confounds, 65
 Each adverse battle gor'd with equal wounds:
 But when his ev'ning wheels o'erhung the main,
 Then conquest crown'd the fierce Ciconian train.
 Six brave companions from each ship we lost,
 The rest escape in haste, and quit the coast. 70

V. 69. *Six brave companions from each ship we lost.*] This is one of the passages which fell under the censure of Zoilus; it is very improbable, says that critic, that each vessel should lose six men exactly; this seems a too equal distribution to be true, considering the chance of battle. But it has been answered, that Ulysses had twelve vessels, and that in this engagement he lost seventy-two soldiers; so that the meaning is, that taking the total of his loss, and dividing it equally through the whole fleet, he found it amounted exactly to six men in every vessel. This will appear to be a true solution, if we remember

With sails outspread we fly th' unequal strife,
 Sad for their loss, but joyful of our life.
 Yet as we fled, our fellows rites we paid,
 And thrice we call'd on each unhappy shade.

Meanwhile the god, whose hand the thunder forms,
 Drives clouds on clouds, and blackens heav'n with
 storms: 76

that there was a necessity to supply the loss of any one ship out of the others that had suffered less: so that though one vessel lost more than the rest, yet being recruited equally from the rest of the fleet, there would be exactly six men wanting in every vessel. EUSTATHIUS.

V. 74. *And thrice we call'd on each unhappy shade.*] This passage preserves a piece of antiquity: it was the custom of the Grecians, when their friends died upon foreign shores, to use this ceremony of recalling their souls, though they obtained not their bodies, believing by this method that they transported them to their own country: Pindar mentions the same practice,

Κελεύαι γὰρ εἶναι
 Ψυχὰν κομίζαι Φριξῶ, &c.

That is, 'Phrixus commands thee to call his soul into his own country.' Thus the Athenians, when they lost any men at sea, went to the shores, and calling thrice on their names, raised a cenotaph or empty monument to their memories; by performing which solemnity, they invited the shades of the departed to return, and performed all rites as if the bodies of the dead had really been buried by them in their sepulchres. EUSTATHIUS.

The Romans as well as the Greeks followed the same custom: thus Virgil:

' — — — Et magnâ manes ter voce vocavi.'

The occasion of this practice arose from the opinion, that the souls of the departed were not admitted into the state of the happy, without the performance of the sepulchral solemnities.

Wide o'er the waste the rage of Boreas sweeps,
 And Night rush'd headlong on the shaded deeps.
 Now here, now there, the giddy ships are borne,
 And all the rattling shrouds in fragments torn. 80
 We furl'd the sail, we ply'd the lab'ring oar,
 Took down our masts, and row'd our ships to shore.
 Two tedious days and two long nights we lay,
 O'erwatch'd and batter'd in the naked bay.
 But the third morning when Aurora brings, 85
 We rear the masts, we spread the canvas wings;
 Refresh'd, and careless on the deck reclin'd,
 We sit, and trust the pilot and the wind.
 Then to my native country had I sail'd:
 But the cape doubled, adverse winds prevail'd. 90
 Strong was the tide, which by the northern blast
 Impell'd, our vessels on Cythera cast.
 Nine days our fleet th' uncertain tempest bore
 Far in wide ocean, and from sight of shore:
 The tenth we touch'd by various errors tost, 95
 The land of Lotos, and the flow'ry coast.

V. 95. *The tenth we touch'd* ———
The land of Lotos ———]

This passage has given occasion for much controversy; for since the Lotophagi in reality are distant from the Malean Cape twenty-two thousand five hundred stades, Ulysses must sail above two thousand every day, if in nine days he sailed to the Lotophagi. This objection would be unanswerable, if we place that nation in the Atlantic ocean; but Dacier observes from Strabo, that Polybius examined this point, and thus gives us the result of it. This great historian maintains, that

We climb'd the beach, and springs of water found,
 Then spread our hasty banquet on the ground.
 Three men were sent, deputed from the crew,
 (An herald one) the dubious coast to view, 100

Homer has not placed the Lotophagi in the Atlantic ocean, as he does the islands of Circe and Calypso, because it was improbable that in the compass of ten days the most favourable winds could have carried Ulysses from the Malean Cape into that ocean; it therefore follows, that the poet has given us the true situation of this nation, conformable to geography, and placed it as it really lies, in the Mediterranean; now in ten days a good wind will carry a vessel from Malea into the Mediterranean, as Homer relates.

This is an instance that Homer sometimes follows truth without fiction, at other times disguises it. But I confess I think Homer's poetry would have been as beautiful if he had described all his islands in their true positions: his inconstancy in this point may seem to introduce confusion and ambiguity, when the truth would have been more clear, and as beautiful in his poetry.

Nothing can better shew the great deference which former ages paid Homer, than these defences of the learned ancients; they continually ascribe his deviations from truth (as in the instance before us) to design, not to ignorance; to his art as a poet, and not to want of skill as a geographer. In a writer of less fame, such relations might be thought errors, but in Homer they are either understood to be no errors, or if errors, they are vindicated by the greatest names of antiquity.

Eustathius adds, that the ancients disagree about this island: some place it about Cyrene, from Maurusia of the African Moors: it is also named Meninx, and lies upon the African coast, near the lesser Syrtis. It is about three hundred and fifty stades in length, and somewhat less in breadth: it is also named Lotophagitis from Lotos.

V. 100. *An herald one.*] The reason why the poet mentions the herald in particular, is because his office was sacred; and by the common law of nations his person inviolable: Ulysses therefore joins an herald in this commission, for the greater security of those whom he sends to search the country. EUSTATHIUS.

And learn what habitants possess'd the place.
 They went, and found a hospitable race;
 Not prone to ill, nor strange to foreign guest,
 They eat, they drink, and nature gives the feast;
 The trees around them, all their fruit produce; 105
 Lotos, the name; divine, nectarious juice!

V. 106. *Lotos*.] Eustathius assures us, that there are various kinds of it. It has been a question whether it is an herb, a root, or a tree: he is of opinion, that Homer speaks of it as an herb; for he calls it *αβύρον σιδάρ*, and that the word *σπένλεισθαι* is in its proper sense applied to the grazing of beasts, and therefore he judges it not to be a tree, or root. He adds, there is an Egyptian *lotos*, which, as Herodotus affirms, grows in great abundance along the Nile in the time of its inundations; it resembles (says that historian in his *Euterpe*) a lily; the Egyptians dry it in the sun, then take the pulp out of it, which grows like the head of a poppy, and bake it as bread; this kind of it agrees likewise with the *Αβύρον σιδάρ* of Homer. Athenæus writes of the Libyan *lotos* in the fourteenth book of his *Deipnosophist*; he quotes the words of Polybius in the twelfth book of his history, now not extant; that historian speaks of it as an eyewitness, having examined the nature of it. 'The *lotos* is a tree of no great height, rough and thorny: it bears a green leaf, somewhat thicker and broader than that of the bramble or briar; its fruit at first is like the ripe berries of the myrtle, both in size and colour, but when it ripens it turns to purple; it is then about the bigness of an olive; it is round, and contains a very small kernel; when it is ripe they gather it, and bruising it among bread-corn, they put it up into a vessel, and keep it as food for their slaves; they dress it after the same manner for their other domestics, but first take out the kernel from it: it has the taste of a fig, or dates, but is of a far better smell; they likewise make a wine of it, by steeping and bruising it in water; it has a very agreeable taste, like wine tempered with honey. They drink it without mixing it with water, but it will not keep above ten days, they therefore make it only in small quantities for immediate use.' Perhaps it was this last kind of *lotos*, which the compa-

(Thence call'd Lotophagi) which whoso tastes,
 Insatiate riots in the sweet repasts,
 Nor other home nor other care intends,
 But quits his house, his country, and his friends: 110
 The three we sent, from off th' enchanting ground
 We dragg'd reluctant, and by force we bound:
 The rest in haste forsook the pleasing shore,
 Or, the charm tasted, had return'd no more.
 Now plac'd in order on their banks, they sweep 115
 The sea's smooth face, and cleave the hoary deep;
 With heavy hearts we labour through the tide,
 To coasts unknown, and oceans yet untry'd.

The land of Cyclops first; a savage kind,
 Nor tam'd by manners, nor by laws confin'd: 120

nions of Ulysses tasted; and if it was thus prepared, it gives a reason why they were overcome with it; for being a wine, it had the power of intoxication.

V. 114. *The charm once tasted, had return'd no more.*] It must be confessed, that the effects of this lotos are extraordinary, and seem fabulous; how then shall we reconcile the relation to credibility? the foundation of it might perhaps be no more than this: the companions of Ulysses might be willing to settle amongst these Lotophagi, being won by the pleasure of the place, and tired with a life of danger and the perils of seas. Or perhaps it is only an allegory, to teach us that those who indulge themselves in pleasures, are with difficulty withdrawn from them, and want an Ulysses to lead them by a kind of violence into the paths of glory.

V. 119. *The land of Cyclops first.*] Homer here confines himself to the true geography of Sicily: for, in reality, a ship may easily sail in one day from the land of the Lotophagi to Sicily: these Cyclops inhabited the western part of that island, about Drepane and Lily-

Untaught to plant, to turn the glebe and sow;
They all their products to free nature owe.

bæum. Bochart shews us, that they derive their name from the place of their habitation; for the Phæacians call them Chek-lub, by contraction for Chek-lélub; that is, the gulf of Lilybæum, or the men who dwell about the Lilybæan gulf. The Greeks (who understood not the Phæacian language) formed the word Cyclop, from Chek lub, from the affinity of sound; which word in the Greek language, signifying a circular eye, might give occasion to fable that they had but one large round eye in the middle of their foreheads, Dacier.

Eustathius tells us, that the eye of Cyclops is an allegory, to represent that in anger, or any other violent passion, men see but one single object, as that passion directs, or see but with one eye: *εἰς ἓν τι, καὶ μόνον σφοδρά*: and that passion transforms us into a kind of savages, and makes us brutal and sanguinary, like this Polypheme; and he that by reason extinguishes such a passion, may like Ulysses be said to put out that eye that made him see but one single object.

I have already given another reason of this fiction; namely, their wearing a head-piece, or martial vizor, that had but one sight through it. The vulgar form their judgments from appearances; and a mariner, who passed these coasts at a distance, observing the resemblance of a broad eye in the forehead of one of these Cyclops, might relate it accordingly, and impose it as a truth upon the credulity of the ignorant: it is notorious that things equally monstrous have found belief in all ages.

But it may be asked if there were any such persons who bore the name of Cyclops? No less an historian than Thucydides informs us, that Sicily was at first possessed and inhabited by giants, by the Læstrigons and Cyclops, a barbarous and inhuman people: but he adds, that these savages dwelt only in one part of that island.

Cedrenus gives us an exact description of the Cyclops: *Εκείθεν Οδυσσεὺς ἐμπιπτεῖ Κυκλωπὶ ἐν Σικελίᾳ ἐκ ἐνὶ ὀφθαλμῷ, &c.* 'Ulysses fell among the Cyclops in Sicily; a people not one-ey'd, according to the mythologists, but men like other men, only of a more gigantic stature, and of a barbarous and savage temper.' From this descrip-

The soil untill'd a ready harvest yields,
 With wheat and barley wave the golden fields,
 Spontaneous wines from weighty clusters pour, 125
 And Jove descends in each prolific show'r.
 By these no statutes and no rights are known,
 No council held, no monarch fills the throne,

tion, we may see what Homer writes as a poet, and what as an historian; he paints these people in general agreeably to their persons, only disguises some features, to give an ornament to his relation, and to introduce the marvellous, which demands a place chiefly in epic poetry.

What Homer speaks of the fertility of Sicily, is agreeable to history: it was called anciently, 'Romani Imperii Horreum.' Pliny, lib. x. cap. 10. writes, that the Leontine plains bear for every grain of corn, an hundred. Diodorus Siculus relates in his History what Homer speaks in poetry, that the fields of Leontium yield wheat without the culture of the husbandman: he was an eye-witness, being a native of the island. From hence in general it may be observed, that wherever we can trace Homer, we find, if not historic truth, yet the resemblance of it; that is, as plain truth as can be related without converting his poem into an history.

V. 127. *By these no statutes and no rights are known,
 No council held, no monarch fills the throne.]*

Plato (observes Spondanus) in his third book of laws, treats of government as practised in the first ages of the world; and refers to this passage of Homer; mankind was originally independent, every 'master of a family was a kind of king of his family, and reigned over his wife and children like the Cyclopeans,' according to the expression of Homer,

Τοισιν δ' ἐπ' ἀγοραί βεληφοροί, ἐπε δειμίστες.

Aristotle likewise complains, that even in his times, in many places, men lived without laws, according to their own fancies, ἡ ἑκάστος ὡς

But high on hills or airy cliffs they dwell,
 Or deep in caves whose entrance leads to hell. 130
 Each rules his race, his neighbour not his care,
 Heedless of others, to his own severe.

βηλεται, κυκλωπικως θεμιστευων παιδων, η αλογος, referring likewise to this passage of Homer.

Dacier adds from Plato, that after the deluge, three manners of life succeeded among mankind: the first was rude and savage; men were afraid of a second flood; and therefore inhabited the summits of mountains, without any dependance upon one another, and each was absolute in his own family: the second was less brutal; as the fear of the deluge wore away by degrees, they descended towards the bottom of mountains, and began to have some intercourse: the third was more polished; when a full security from the apprehensions of a flood was established by time, they then began to inhabit the plains, and a more general commerce by degrees prevailing, they entered into societies, and established laws for the general good of the whole community. These Cyclopeans maintained the first state of life in the days of Ulysses; they had no intercourse with other societies, by reason of their barbarities, and consequently their manners were not at all polished by the general laws of humanity. This account agrees excellently with the holy Scriptures, and perhaps Plato borrowed it from the writings of Moses; after the deluge men retreated to the mountains for fear of a second flood; the chief riches, like these Cyclopeans, consisted in flocks and herds; and every master of a family ruled his house without any controul or subordination.

V. 129. *But high on hills — — or deep in caves.*] This is said, to give an air of probability to the revenge which Ulysses takes upon this giant, and indeed to the whole story. He describes his solitary life, to shew that he was utterly destitute of assistance; and it is for the same reason, continues Eustathius, that the poet relates that he left his fleet under a desert neighbouring island, namely, to make it probable, that the Cyclops could not seize it, or pursue Ulysses, having no shipping.

Oppos'd to the Cyclopean coasts, there lay
 An isle, whose hills their subject fields survey;
 Its name Lachæa, crown'd with many a grove, 135
 Where savage goats through pathless thickets rove:
 No needy mortals here, with hunger bold,
 Or wretched hunters, through the wint'ry cold
 Pursue their flight; but leave them safe to bound
 From hill to hill, o'er all the desert ground. 140
 Nor knows the soil to feed the fleecy care,
 Or feels the labours of the crooked share;
 But uninhabited, untill'd, unsown
 It lies, and breeds the bleating goat alone.
 For there no vessel with vermilion prore, 145
 Or bark of traffick, glides from shore to shore;
 The rugged race of savages, unskill'd
 The seas to traverse, or the ships to build,
 Gaze on the coast, nor cultivate the soil;
 Unlearn'd in all th' industrious arts of toil. 150
 Yet here all products and all plants abound,
 Sprung from the fruitful genius of the ground;

V. 134. *An isle, whose hills, &c.*] This little isle is now called Ægusa, which signifies the isle of goats. Cluverius describes it after the manner of Homer, 'Prata mollia, et irrigua, solum fertile, portum commodum, fontes limpidos.' It is not certain whether the poet gives any name to it: perhaps it had not received any in those ages, it being without inhabitants; though some take *λαχαια* for a proper name, as is observed by Eustathius.

V. 144. *Bleating goat.*] It is exactly thus in the original, verse 124, *μηραδας*, 'balantes;' which Pollux, lib. v. observes not to be the proper term for the voice of goats, which is *φριλαγμας*.

Fields waving high with heavy crops are seen,
 And vines that flourish in eternal green,
 Refreshing meads along the murm'ring main, 155
 And fountains streaming down the fruitful plain.

A port there is, enclos'd on either side,
 Where ships may rest, unanchor'd and unty'd;
 Till the glad mariners incline to sail,
 And the sea whitens with the rising gale. 160
 High at its head, from out the cavern'd rock
 In living rills a gushing fountain broke:
 Around it, and above, for ever green
 The bushing alders form'd a shady scene.
 Hither some fav'ring god, beyond our thought, 165
 Through all-surrounding shade our navy brought;
 For gloomy night descended on the main,
 Nor glimmer'd Phœbe in th' ethereal plain:
 But all unseen the clouded island lay,
 And all unseen the surge and rolling sea, 170
 Till safe we anchor'd in the shelter'd bay:
 Our sails we gather'd, cast our cables o'er,
 And slept secure along the sandy shore.

V. 165. *Hither some fav'ring god* ———] This circumstance is inserted with great judgment, Ulysses otherwise might have landed in Sicily, and fallen into the hands of the Cyclopeans, and consequently been lost inevitably: he therefore piously ascribes his safety, by being driven upon this desolate island, to the guidance of the gods; he uses it as a retreat, leaves his navy there, and passes over into Sicily in one single vessel, undiscovered by these gigantic savages; this reconciles the relation to probability, and renders his escape practicable. EUSTATHIUS.

Soon as again the rosy morning shone,
 Reveal'd the landscape and the scene unknown, 175
 With wonder seiz'd we view the pleasing ground,
 And walk delighted, and expatiate round.
 Rous'd by the woodland nymphs, at early dawn,
 The mountain goats came bounding o'er the lawn :

V. 178. *The woodland nymphs.*] This passage is not without obscurity, and it is not easy to understand what is meant by 'the daughters of Jupiter.' Eustathius tells us, the poet speaks allegorically, and that he means to specify the plants and herbs of the field. Jupiter denotes the air, not only in Homer, but in the Latin poets. Thus Virgil.

'Tum pater omnipotens fœcundis imbribus Æther
 Conjugis in gremium lætæ descendit ———'

and consequently the herbs and plants, being nourished by the mild air and fruitful rains, may be said to be the daughters of Jupiter, or offspring of the skies; and these goats and beasts of the field, being fed by these plants and herbs, may be said to be awakened by the daughters of Jupiter, that is, they awake to feed upon the herbage early in the morning. *Κεραι Διός, ἀλλήγορικῶς αἱ τῶν φυτῶν ἀνξήτικαι δυνάμεις, αἷς ὁ θεὸς ποιεῖ.* Thus Homer makes deities of the vegetative faculties and virtues of the field. I fear such boldnesses would not be allowed in modern poetry.

It must be confessed that this interpretation is very refined: but I am sure it will be a more natural explication to take these for the real mountain nymphs (Oreades) as they are in many places of the Odyssey; the very expression is found in the sixth book,

— — — *Νυμφαὶ κεραι Διός* ———

and there signifies the nymphs attending upon Diana in her sports: and immediately after Ulysses, being awakened by a sudden noise, mistakes Nausicaa and her damsels for nymphs of the mountains or floods. This conjecture will not be without probability, if we re-

In haste our fellows to the ships repair, 180
 For arms and weapons of the silvan war;
 Straight in three squadrons all our crew we part,
 And bend the bow, or wing the missile dart;
 The bounteous gods afford a copious prey,
 And nine fat goats each vessel bears away: 185
 The royal bark had ten. Our ships complete
 We thus supply'd, (for twelve were all the fleet).

Here, till the setting sun roll'd down the light,
 We sat indulging in the genial rite:
 Nor wines were wanting; those from ample jars 190
 We drain'd the prize of our Ciconian wars.
 The land of Cyclops lay in prospect near;
 The voice of goats and bleating flocks we hear,
 And from their mountains rising smokes appear.
 Now sunk the sun, and darkness cover'd o'er 195
 The face of things: along the sea-beat shore
 Sate we slept: but when the sacred dawn
 Arising glitter'd o'er the dewy lawn,
 I call'd my fellows, and these words address.
 My dear associates, here indulge your rest: 200
 While, with my single ship, advent'rous I
 Go forth, the manners of yon men to try;

member that these nymphs were huntresses, as is evident from their relation to Diana. Why then may not this other expression be meant of the nymphs that are fabled to inhabit the mountains?

V. 201. *While, with my single ship, advent'rous I.*] The reader may be pleased to observe, that the poet has here given the reins to his fancy, and run out into a luxuriant description of *Ægusa* and

Whether a race unjust, of barb'rous might,
Rude, and unconscious of a stranger's right;
Or such who harbour pity in their breast, 205
Revere the gods, and succour the distress?

 This said, I climb'd my vessel's lofty side;
My train obey'd me and the ship unty'd.
In order scated on their banks, they sweep 209
Neptune's smooth face, and cleave the yielding deep.
When to the nearest verge of land we drew,
Fast by the sea a lonely cave we view,
High, and with dark'ning laurels cover'd o'er;
Where sheep and goats lay slumb'ring round the shore.
Near this, a fence of marble from the rock, 215
Brown with o'er-arching pine, and spreading oak.
A giant-shepherd here his flock maintains
Far from the rest, and solitary reigns,
In shelter thick of horrid shade recl'n'd;
And gloomy mischiefs labour in his mind. 220

Sicily: he refreshes the mind of the reader with a pleasing and beautiful scene, before he enters upon a story of so much horror, as this of the Cyclops.

A very sufficient reason may be assigned, why Ulysses here goes in person to search this land: he dares not, as Eustathius remarks, trust his companions; their disobedience among the Ciconians, and their unworthy conduct among the Lotophagi, have convinced him that no confidence is to be reposed in them: this seems probable, and upon this probability Homer proceeds to bring about the punishment of Polypheme, which the wisdom of Ulysses effects, and it is an action of importance, and consequently ought to be performed by the hero of the poem.

A form enormous! far unlike the race
Of human birth, in stature, or in face;

V. 221. *A form enormous! far unlike the race of human birth.*] Geropius Becanus, an Antwerpian, has wrote a large discourse to prove, that there never were any such men as giants; contrary to the testimony both of profane and sacred history: thus Moses speaks of the Rephaims of Asteroth, the Zamzummims of Ham, the Emims of Moab, and Anakims of Hebron. See Deut. ii. ver. 20. 'That also was called a land of giants, it was a great people, and tall as the Zamzummims.' Thus Goliath must be allowed to be a giant, for he was six cubits and a span, that is, nine feet and a span in height; his coat of mail weighed five thousand shekels of brass, about one hundred and fifty pounds (but I confess others understand the lesser shekel): the head of his spear alone weighed six hundred shekels of iron, that is, about eighteen or nineteen pounds. We find the like relations in profane history: Plutarch in his life of Theseus says, that age was productive of men of prodigious stature, giants. Thus Diodorus Siculus; 'Ægyptii scribunt, Isidiis atate, fuisse vasto corpore homines, quos Græci dixere gigantes.' Herodotus affirms that the body of Orestes was dug up, and appeared to be seven cubits long; but Aulus Gellius believes this to be an error. Josephus writes, l. xviii. c. 6. that Vitellius sent a Jew named Eleazar, seven cubits in height, as a present from Artabanes king of the Parthians, to Tiberius Cæsar; this man was ten feet and a half high. Pliny vii. 16. speaks of a man that was nine feet nine inches high; and in another place, vi. 30. 'Sybortas, gentem Æthiopum Nomadam, octona cubita longitudine excedere.'

Thus it is evident, that there have been men of very extraordinary stature in former ages. Though perhaps such instances were not frequent in any age or any nation. So that Homer only amplifies, not invents; and as there was really a people called Cyclopeans, so they might be men of great stature, or giants.

It may seem strange that in all ancient stories the first planters of most nations are recorded to be giants; I scarce can persuade myself but such accounts are generally fabulous; and hope to be pardoned for a conjecture which may give a seeming reason how such stories

As some lone mountain's monstrous growth he stood,
Crown'd with rough thickets, and a nodding wood.

I left my vessel at the point of land, 225

And close to guard it, gave our crew command :

With only twelve the boldest and the best,

I seek th' adventure, and forsake the rest.

Then took a goatskin fill'd with precious wine,

The gift of Maron of E'vantheus' line, 230

(The priest of Phœbus at th' Ismarian shrine.)

came to prevail. The Greeks were a people of very great antiquity; they made many expeditions, as appears from Jason, &c. and sent out frequent colonies: now the head of every colony was called *Αναξ*, and these adventurers being persons of great figure in story, were recorded as men of war, of might and renown, through the old world: it is therefore not impossible but the Hebrews might form their word *Anac*, from the Greek *αναξ*, and use it to denote persons of uncommon might and abilities. These they called *Anac*, and sons of *Anac*; and afterwards in a less proper sense used it to signify men of uncommon stature, or giants. So that in this sense, all nations may be said to be originally peopled by a son of *Anac*, or a giant. But this is submitted as a conjecture to the reader's judgment.

V. 229. *Precious wine, the gift of Maron.*] Such digressions as these are frequent in Homer, but I am far from thinking them always beauties: it is true, they give variety to poetry; but whether that be an equivalent for calling off the attention of the reader from the more important action, and diverting it with small incidents, is what I much question. It is not indeed impossible but this *Maron* might have been the friend of *Homer*, and this praise of him will then be a monument of his grateful disposition; and in this view a beauty. It must be confessed that *Ulysses* makes use of this wine to a very good effect, viz. to bring about the destruction of *Polypheme*, and his own deliverance; and therefore it was necessary to set it off very particularly, but this might have been done in fewer lines. As

In sacred shade his honour'd mansion stood
 Amidst Apollo's consecrated wood;
 Him, and his house, heav'n mov'd my mind to save,
 And costly presents in return he gave; 235
 Seven golden talents to perfection wrought,
 A silver bowl that held a copious draught,
 And twelve large vessels of unmingled wine,
 Mellifluous, undecaying, and divine!
 Which now some ages from his race conceal'd, 240
 The hoary sire in gratitude reveal'd;
 Such was the wine: to quench whose fervent steam,
 Scarce twenty measures from the living stream
 To cool one cup suffic'd: the goblet crown'd
 Breath'd aromatic fragrances around. 245
 Of this an ample vase we heav'd aboard,
 And brought another with provisions stor'd.
 My soul foreboded I should find the bow'r
 Of some fell monster, fierce with barb'rous pow'r, 249
 Some rustic wretch, who liv'd in heav'n's despight,
 Contemning laws, and trampling on the right.

it now stands it is a little episode; our expectations are raised to learn the event of so uncommon an adventure, when all of a sudden Homer breaks the story, and gives us a history of Maron. But I distrust my judgment much rather than Homer's.

V. 243. *Scarce twenty measures from the living stream
 To cool one cup suffic'd ———*]

There is no wine of so strong a body as to bear such a disproportionable quantity; but Homer amplifies the strength of it to prepare the reader for its surprising effects immediately upon Polypheme.

The cave we found, but vacant all within,
(His flock the giant tended on the green)
But round the grot we gaze; and all we view,
In order rang'd, our admiration drew: 255
The bending³ shelves with loads of checses prest,
The folded flocks each sep'rate from the rest,
(The larger here, and there the lesser lambs,
The new fall'n young here bleating for their dams;
The kid distinguish'd from the lambkin lies:) 260
The cavern echoes with responsive cries.
Capacious chargers all around were laid,
Full pails, and vessels of the milking trade.
With fresh provisions hence our fleet to store
My friends advise me, and to quit the shore; 265
Or drive a flock of sheep and goats away,
Consult our safety, and put off to sea.
Their wholesome counsel rashly I declin'd,
Curious to view the man of monstrous kind,

V. 250. *Some rustic wretch, who liv'd, &c.*] This whole passage must be considered as told by a person long after the adventure was past, otherwise how should Ulysses know that this cave was the habitation of a savage monster before he had seen him? and when he tells us that himself and twelve companions went to search, what people were inhabitants of this island? Eustathius and Dacier seem both to overlook this observation; for in a following note she condemns Ulysses for not flying from the island, as he was advised by his companions. But if, on the other hand, we suppose that Ulysses was under apprehensions, from the savageness of the place, of finding a savage race of people, it will be natural enough that his mind should forebode as much; and it appears from other passages, that this sort of instinctive presage was a favourite opinion of Homer's.

And try what social rites a savage lends: 270
Dire rites alas! and fatal to my friends!

Then first a fire we kindle, and prepare
For his return with sacrifice and pray'r.
The loaden shelves afford us full repast;
We sit expecting. Lo! he comes at last. 275
Near half a forest on his back he bore,
And cast the pond'rous burden at the door.
It thunder'd as it fell. We trembled then,
And sought the deep recesses of the den.
Now driv'n before him, through the arching rock, 280
Came tumbling, heaps on heaps, th' unnumber'd
flock:

Big-udder'd ewes, and goats of female kind,
(The males were penn'd in outward courts behind)
Then, heav'd on high, a rock's enormous weight
To the cave's mouth he roll'd, and clos'd the gate. 285
(Scarce twenty-four wheel'd cars, compact and strong,
The massy load could bear, or roll along.)
He next betakes him to his ev'ning cares,
And sitting down, to milk his flocks prepares;
Of half their udders eases first the dams, 290
Then to the mother's teat submits the lambs.
Half the white stream to hard'ning cheese he prest,
And high in wicker-baskets heap'd: the rest,
Reserv'd in bowls, supply'd the nightly feast.
His labour done, he fir'd the pile that gave 295
A sudden blaze, and lighted all the cave.

We stand discover'd by the rising fires;
Askance the giant glares, and thus inquires.

What are ye, guests; on what adventure, say,
Thus far ye wander through the wat'ry way? 300
Pirates perhaps, who seek through seas unknown
The lives of others, and expose your own?

His voice like thunder through the cavern sounds:
My bold companions thrilling fear confounds,
Appall'd at sight of more than mortal man! 305
At length, with heart recover'd, I began.

From Troy's fam'd fields, sad wand'ers o'er the main,
Behold the relicks of the Grecian train!
Through various seas by various vessels tost,
And forc'd by storms, unwilling, on your coast; 310
Far from our destin'd course, and native land,
Such was our fate, and such high Jove's command!
Nor what we are befits us to disclaim,
Atrides' friends, (in arms a mighty name)

V. 307. *From Troy's fam'd fields, &c.*] This speech is very well adapted to make an impression upon Polypheme. Ulysses applies to move either his fears or his compassion; he tells him he is an unfortunate person, and comes as a suppliant; and if this prevails nothing, he adds, he is a subject of the great Agamemnon, who had lately destroyed a mighty kingdom: which is spoken to make him afraid to offer violence to the subject of a king who had power to revenge any injuries offered his people. To intimidate him further, he concludes with the mention of the gods, and in particular of Jupiter, as avengers of any breach of the laws of hospitality: these are arguments well chosen to move any person, but an inhuman Polypheme. EUSTATHIUS.

Who taught proud Troy and all her sons to bow; 315
Victors of late, but humble suppliants now!

Low at thy knee thy succour we implore;

Respect us, human, and relieve us, poor.

At least some hospitable gift bestow;

'Tis what the happy to th' unhappy owe: 320

'Tis what the gods require: those gods revere,

The poor and stranger are their constant care;

To Jove their cause, and their revenge belongs,

He wanders with them, and he feels their wrongs.

Fools that ye are! (the savage thus replies, 325

His inward fury blazing at his eyes)

Or strangers, distant far from our abodes,

To bid me reverence or regard the gods.

Know then we Cyclops are a race, above 329

Those air-bred people, and their goat-nurs'd Jove:

And learn, our power proceeds with thee and thine,

Not as he wills, but as ourselves incline.

But answer, the good ship that brought ye o'er,

Where lies she anchor'd? near or off the shore?

Thus he. His meditated fraud I find, 335

(Vers'd in the turns of various human kind)

And cautious, thus. Against a dreadful rock,

Fast by your shore the gallant vessel broke,

Scarce with these few I 'scap'd; of all my train,

Whom angry Neptune whelm'd beneath the main;

The scatter'd wreck the winds blew back again. 341

He answer'd with his deed. His bloody hand
 Snatch'd two, unhappy! of my martial band;
 And dash'd like dogs against the stony floor:
 The pavement swims with brains and mingled gore.
 Torn limb from limb, he spreads his horrid feast, 346
 And fierce devours it like a mountain beast:
 He sucks the marrow, and the blood he drains,
 Nor entrails, flesh, nor solid bone remains.
 We see the death from which we cannot move, 350
 And humbled groan beneath the hand of Jove.

V. 344. *And dash'd like dogs —*

The pavement swims, &c.]

There is a great beauty in the versification in the original.

Συν δε δυω μαρψας, ωστε σκυλακας ποτι γαιη

Κοπ' εν δ' εγκεφαλῳ χαμαδις ρεε, δευε δε γαιαν.

Dionysius Halicarn. takes notice of it, in his Dissertation upon placing words: when the companions of Ulysses, says that author, are dashed against the rock, to express the horror of the action, Homer dwells upon the most inharmonious harsh letters and syllables: he no where uses any softness, or any run of verses to please the ear. Scalliger injudiciously condemns this description: 'Homer,' says he, 'makes use of the most offensive and loathsome expressions, more fit for a butcher's shambles than the majesty of heroic poetry.' Macrobius, lib. v. cap. 13, of his Saturnalia, commends these lines of Homer, and even prefers them before the same description in Virgil; his words are, 'Narrationem facti nudam Maro posuit, Homerus *παθος* miscuit, et dolore narrandi invidiam crudelitatis æquavit.' And indeed he must be a strange critic that expects soft verses upon a horrible occasion; whereas the verses ought, if possible, to represent the thought they are intended to convey; and every person's ear will inform him that Homer has not in this passage executed this rule unsuccessfully.

His ample maw with human carnage fill'd,
A milky deluge next the giant swill'd;
Then stretch'd in length o'er half the cavern'd rock,
Lay senseless, and supine, amidst the flock. 355
To seize the time, and with a sudden wound
To fix the slumb'ring monster to the ground,
My soul impels me; and in act I stand
To draw the sword; but wisdom held my hand.
A deed so rash had finish'd all our fate, 360
No mortal forces from the lofty gate
Could roll the rock. In hopeless grief we lay,
And sigh, expecting the return of day.
Now did the rosy finger'd morn arise,
And shed her sacred light along the skies. 365
He wakes, he lights the fire, he milks the dams,
And to the mother's teats submits the lambs.
The task thus finish'd of his morning hours,
Two more he snatches, murders, and devours.
Then pleas'd and whistling, drives his flock before;
Removes the rocky mountain from the door, 371
And shuts again: with equal ease dispos'd,
As a light quiver's lid is op'd and clos'd.
His giant voice the echoing region fills:
His flocks, obedient, spread o'er all the hills. 375
Thus left behind, e'en in the last despair
I thought, devis'd, and Pallas heard my prayer.
Revenge, and doubt, and caution work'd my breast;
But this of many counsels seem'd the best:

The monster's club within the cave I spy'd, 380
 A tree of stateliest growth, and yet undry'd,
 Green from the wood; of height and bulk so vast,
 The largest ship might claim it for a mast.
 This shorten'd of its top, I gave my train
 A fathom's length, to shape it and to plane; 385
 The narrow'r end I sharpen'd to a spire;
 Whose point we harden'd with the force of fire,
 And hid it in the dust that strow'd the cave.
 Then to my few companions, bold and brave,
 Propos'd, who first the vent'rous deed should try,
 In the broad orbit of his monstrous eye 391
 To plunge the brand, and twirl the pointed wood,
 When slumber next should tame the man of blood.
 Just as I wish'd, the lots were cast on four:
 Myself the fifth. We stand and wait the hour. 395
 He comes with ev'ning: all his fleecy flock
 Before him march, and pour into the rock:
 Not one, or male or female staid behind;
 (So fortune chanc'd, or so some god design'd)

V. 394. *The lots were cast* —] Ulysses bids his friends to cast lots; this is done to shew that he would not voluntarily expose them to so imminent danger. If he had made the choice himself, they whom he had chosen might have thought he had given them up to destruction, and they whom he had rejected might have judged it a stain upon them as a want of merit, and so have complained of injustice; but by this method he avoids these inconveniencies.

V. 399. *Or so some god design'd.*] Ulysses ascribes it to the influence of the gods that Polypheme drives the whole flock into his den, and does not separate the females from the males, as he had before

Then heaving high the stone's unwieldy weight, 400
He roll'd it on the cave, and clos'd the gate.
First down he sits, to milk the woolly dams,
And then permits their udder to the lambs.
Next seiz'd two wretches more, and headlong cast,
Brain'd on the rock; his second dire repast. 405
I then approach'd him recking with their gore,
And held the brimming goblet foaming o'er:
Cyclop! since human flesh has been thy feast,
Now drain this goblet, potent to digest:
Know hence what treasures in our ship we lost, 410
And what rich liquors other climates boast.
We to thy shore the precious freight shall bear,
If home thou send us, and vouchsafe to spare.
But oh! thus furious, thirsting thus for gore,
The sons of men shall ne'er approach thy shore, 415
And never shalt thou taste this nectar more.

He heard, he took, and pouring down his throat
Delighted, swill'd the large luxurious draught.
More! give me more, he cry'd: the boon be thine,
Whoe'er thou art that bear'st celestial wine! 420
Declare thy name; not mortal is this juice,
Such as th' unblest Cyclopean climes produce,

done; for by this accident Ulysses makes his escape, as appears from the following part of the story. Homer here uses the word *οισσαμενος*, to shew the suspicion which Polypheme might entertain that Ulysses had other companions abroad who might plunder his flocks; and this gives another reason why he drove them all into his cave, namely, for the greater security.

(Though sure our vine the largest cluster yields,
And Jove's scorn'd thunder serves to drench our fields)
But this descended from the blest abodes, 425
A rill of nectar, streaming from the gods.

He said; and greedy grasp'd the heady bowl,
Thrice drain'd, and pour'd the deluge on his soul.
His sense lay cover'd with the dozy fume;
While thus my fraudulent speech I reassume. 430
Thy promis'd boon, O Cyclop! now I claim,
And plead my title: Noman is my name.
By that distinguish'd from my tender years,
'Tis what my parents call me, and my peers.

V. 432. — — *Noman is my name*] I will not trouble the reader with a long account of *εἰς* to be found in Eustathius, who seems delighted with this piece of pleasantry; nor with what Dacier observes, who declares she approves of it extremely, and calls it a very happy imagination. If it were modesty in me to dissent from Homer, and two commentators, I would own my opinion of it, and acknowledge the whole to be nothing but a collusion of words, and fitter to have place in a farce or comedy, than in epic poetry. Lucian has thus used it, and applied it to raise laughter in one of his facetious dialogues. The whole wit or jest lies in the ambiguity of *εἰς*, which Ulysses imposes upon Polypheme as his own name, which in reality signifies 'No man.' I doubt not but Homer was well pleased with it, for afterwards he plays upon the word, and calls Ulysses *εἰδᾶνος εἰς*. But the faults of Homer have a kind of veneration, perhaps like old age, from their antiquity.

Euripides has translated this whole passage in his tragedy, called the Cyclops. The Chorus begins thus, 'Why dost thou thus cry out, Cyclops? *Cyc.* I am undone. *Cho.* You seem to be in a woful condition. *Cyc.* I am utterly miserable. *Cho.* You have been drunk and fallen into the embers. *Cyc.* Noman has undone me. *Cho.* Well

The giant then. Our promis'd grace receive, 435
 The hospitable boon we mean to give:
 When all thy wretched crew have felt my pow'r,
 Noman shall be the last I will devour.

He said: then noddling with the fumes of wine
 Dropt his huge head, and snoring lay supine. 440
 His neck obliquely o'er his shoulders hung,
 Press'd with the weight of sleep that tames the strong!
 There belch'd the mingled steams of wine and blood,
 And human flesh, his indigested food.
 Sudden I stir the embers, and inspire 445
 With animating breath the seeds of fire;
 Each drooping spirit with bold words repair,
 And urge my train the dreadful deed to dare.
 The stake now glow'd beneath the burning bed
 (Green as it was) and sparkled fiery red. 450
 Then forth the vengeful instrument I bring;
 With beating hearts my fellows form a ring.
 Urg'd by some present god, they swift let fall
 The pointed torment on his visual ball.
 Myself above them from a rising ground 455
 Guide the sharp stake, and twirl it round and round.

then, No man has injured you. *Cyc.* Noman has blinded me. *Cho.*
 Then you are not blind.

This appears to me more fit for the two Sosias in Plautus, than for tragic or epic poetry; and I fancy an author who should introduce such a sport of words upon the stage, even in the comedy of our days, would meet with small applause.

As when a shipwright stands his workmen o'er,
 Who ply the wimble, some huge beam to bore;
 Urg'd on all hands it nimbly spins about,
 The grain deep-piercing till it scoops it out: 460
 In his broad eye so whirls the fi'ry wood;
 From the pierc'd pupil spouts the boiling blood;
 Sing'd are his brows: the scorching lids grow black;
 The gelly bubbles, and the fibres crack.
 And as when arm'ers temper in the ford 465
 The keen-edg'd pole-ax, or the shining sword,
 The red-hot metal hisses in the lake,
 Thus in his eye-ball hiss'd the plunging stake.
 He sends a dreadful groan: the rocks around
 Through all their inmost winding caves resound. 470
 Scar'd we receded. Forth, with frantic hand
 He tore, and dash'd on earth the goary brand:

V. 458. *Who ply the wimble.*] This and the following comparison are drawn from low life, but ennobled with a dignity of expression. Instead of *ελοντες*, Aristarchus reads *εχοντες*, as Eustathius informs us. The similitudes are natural and lively, we are made spectators of what they represent. Sophocles has imitated this, in the tragedy where Œdipus tears out his own eyes; and Euripides has transferred this whole adventure into his Cyclops with very little alteration, and in particular the former comparison. But to instance in all that Euripides has imitated, would be to transcribe a great part of that tragedy. In short, this episode in general is very noble; but if the interlude about *Ovris* be at all allowable in so grave and majestic a poem, it is only allowable because it is here related before a light and injudicious assembly; I mean the Phæacians, to whom any thing more great or serious would have been less pleasing; so that the poet writes to his audience. I wonder this has never been offered in defence of this low entertainment.

Then calls the Cyclops, all that round him dwell,
 With voice like thunder, and a direful yell.
 From all their dens the one-ey'd race repair, 475
 From rifted rocks, and mountains bleak in air.
 All haste assembled, at his well-known rear,
 Enquire the cause, and crowd the cavern door.

What hurts thee, Polypheme? what strange affright
 Thus breaks our slumbers, and disturbs the night? 480
 Does any mortal in th' unguarded hour
 Of sleep, oppress thee, or by fraud or pow'r?
 Or thieves insidious the fair flock surprise?
 Thus they: the Cyclop from his den replies.

Friends, Noman kills me; Noman in the hour
 Of sleep, oppresses me with fraudulent pow'r. 486
 ' If no man hurt thee, but the hand divine
 Inflict disease, it fits thee to resign:
 To Jove or to thy father Neptune pray,
 The brethren cry'd, and instant strode away. 490

Joy touch'd my secret soul, and conscious heart,
 Pleas'd with th' effect of conduct and of art.
 Meantime the Cyclop, raging with his wound,
 Spreads his wide arms, and searches round and round:
 At last, the stone removing from the gate, 495
 With hands extended in the midst he sat:

V. 495. — — *The stone removing from the gate*] This conduct of Polypheme may seem very absurd, and it looks to be improbable that he should not call the other giants to assist him, in the detection of the persons who had taken his sight from him; especially when it

And search'd each passing sheep, and felt it o'er,
 Secure to seize us ere we reach'd the door.
 (Such as his shallow wit, he deem'd was mine)
 But secret I revolv'd the deep design; 500
 'Twas for our lives my lab'ring bosom wrought;
 Each scheme I turn'd, and sharpen'd ev'ry thought;
 This way and that, I cast to save my friends,
 'Till one resolve my varying counsel ends.

Strong were the rams, with native purple fair, 505
 Well fed, and largest of the fleecy care.
 These three and threc, with osier bands we ty'd,
 (The twining bands the Cyclop's bed supply'd)
 The midmost bore a man; the outward two
 Secur'd each side: so bound we all the crew. 510
 One ram remain'd, the leader of the flock;
 In his deep fleece my grasping hands I lock,

was now day-light, and they at hand. Eustathius was aware of the objection, and imputes it to his folly and dullness. Tully, 5 Tuscul. gives the same character of Polypheme; and because it vindicates Homer for introducing a speech of Polypheme to his ram; I will beg leave to transcribe it. 'Tiresiam, quem sapientem fingunt poetæ, nunquam inducunt deplorantem Cæcitatem suam; at verò Polyphemum Homerus, cum immanem ferumque finisset, cum ariete etiam colloquentem facit, ejusque laudare fortunas, quod quæ vellet, ingredi posset, et quæ vellet attingere: recte hic equidem; nihilo enim erat ipse Cyclops quam aries ille prudentior.' This is a full defence of Homer; but Tully has mistaken the words of Polypheme to the ram, for there is no resemblance to 'ejus laudare fortunas, quod quæ vellet ingredi posset, &c.' I suppose Tully quoted by memory.

V. 511. *One ram remain'd, the leader of the flock.*] This passage has been misunderstood, to imply that Ulysses took more care of him-

And fast beneath, in woolly curls inwove,
 There cling implicit, and confide in Jove.
 When rosy morning glimmer'd o'er the dales, 515
 He drove to pasture all the lusty males:
 The ewes still folded, with distended thighs
 Unmilk'd, lay bleating in distressful cries.

self than of his companions, in choosing the largest ram for his own convenience; an imputation unworthy of the character of an hero. But there is no ground for it; he takes more care of his friends than of his own person, for he allots them three sheep, and lets them escape before him. Besides, this conduct was necessary; for all his friends were bound, and, by choosing this ram, he keeps himself at liberty to unbind the rest after their escape. Neither was there any other method practicable; for he, being the last, there was no person to bind him. EUSTATHIUS.

The care Ulysses takes of his companions agrees with the character of Horace.

'Dum sibi, dum sociis reditum parat, aspera multa
 Pertulit' ———

But it may seem improbable that a ram should be able to carry so great a burden as Ulysses; the generation of sheep, as well as men, may appear to have decreased since the days of Ulysses. Homer himself seems to have guarded against this objection; he describes these sheep as *εστρεφεις, καλοι, μεγαλοι*; the ram is spoken of as *μακρα βιβας*, (an expression applied to Ajax, as Eustathius observes, in the *Iliad*.) History informs us of sheep of a very large size in other countries, and a poet is at liberty to choose the largest, if by that method he gives his story a greater appearance of probability.

V. 517. *The ewes still folded, ———*
Unmilk'd, lay bleating ———]

This particularity may seem of no importance, and consequently unnecessary: but it is in poetry as in painting; they both with very good

But heedless of those cares, with anguish stung,
He felt their fleeces as they pass'd along. 520
(Fool that he was) and let them safely go,
All unsuspecting of their freight below.

The master ram at last approach'd the gate,
Charg'd with his wool, and with Ulysses' fate.
Him while he pass'd the monster blind bespoke: 525
What makes my ram the lag of all the flock?
First thou wert wont to crop the flow'ry mead,
First to the field and river's bank to lead,
And first with stately step at evening hour
Thy fleecy fellows usher to their bow'r. 530
Now far the last, with pensive pace and slow
Thou mov'st, as conscious of thy master's woe!
Seest thou these lids that now unfold in vain?
(The deed of Noman and his wicked train)
Oh! didst thou feel for thy afflicted lord, 535
And would but Fate the pow'r of speech afford;
Soon might'st thou tell me, where in secret here
The dastard lurks, all trembling with his fear:
Swung round and round, and dash'd from rock to rock,
His batter'd brains should on the pavement smoke.
No ease, no pleasure my sad heart receives, 541
While such a monster as vile Noman lives.

effect use circumstances that are not absolutely necessary to the subject, but only appendages and embellishments. This particular has that effect; it represents nature, and therefore gives an air of truth and probability to the story. DACIER.

The giant spoke, and through the hollow rock
Dismiss'd the ram, the father of the flock.
No sooner freed, and through th' enclosure past, 545
First I release myself, my fellows last:
Fat sheep and goats in throngs we drive before,
And reach our vessel on the winding shore.
With joy the sailors view their friends return'd,
And hail us living whom as dead they mourn'd. 550
Big tears of transport stand in ev'ry eye:
I check their fondness, and command to fly.
Aboard in haste they heave the wealthy sheep,
And snatch their oars, and rush into the deep.

Now off at sea, and from the shallows clear, 555
As far as human voice could reach the ear;
With taunts the distant giant I accost,
Hear me, oh Cyclop! hear ungracious host!
'Twas on no coward, no ignoble slave,
Thou meditat'st thy meal in yonder cave; 560
But one, the vengeance fated from above
Doom'd to inflict; th' instrument of Jove.
Thy barb'rous breach of hospitable bands,
The god, the god revenges by my hands.

These words the Cyclop's burning rage provoke:
From the tall hill he rends a pointed rock; 566
High o'er the billows flew the massy load,
And near the ship came thund'ring on the flood.
It almost brush'd the helm, and fell before:
The whole sea shook, and reflux beat the shore. 570

The strong concussion on the heaving tide
 Roll'd back the vessel to the island's side:

V. 569. *It almost brush'd the helm, &c.*] The ancients, remarks Eustathius, placed an obelisk and asterism before this verse; the former, to note that they thought it misplaced; the latter, to shew that they looked upon it as a beauty. Apparently it is not agreeable to the description; for how is it possible that this huge rock falling *before* the vessel should endanger the rudder, which is in the stern? Can a ship sail with the stern foremost? Some ancient critics, to take away the contradiction, have asserted that Ulysses turned his ship to speak to Polypheme; but this is absurd, for why could not Ulysses speak from the stern as well as from the prow? it therefore seems that the verse ought to be entirely omitted, as undoubtedly it may without any chasm in the author. We find it inserted a little lower, and there it corresponds with the description, and stands with propriety.

But if we suppose that the ship of Ulysses lay at such a distance from the cave of Polypheme, as to make it necessary to bring it nearer, to be heard distinctly; then indeed we may solve the difficulty, and let the verse stand: for if we suppose Ulysses approaching towards Polypheme, then the rock may be said to be thrown before the vessel, that is, beyond it, and endanger the rudder, and this bears some appearance of probability.

This passage brings to my memory a description of Polypheme in Apollonius, Argonaut. 1.

Κεῖν' ἀγρὴ καὶ πονίῃ ἐπὶ γλαυκοῖο θεσπεν
 Οἰδμαλῖ, ὅδε θεὸς βαπτεν ποδάς ἀλλ' ὅσον ἀκροῖς
 Ἰχνεσὶ τέλγομεν' διερὴ πεφορητὸ κελυθῷ.

If Polypheme had really this quality of running upon the waves, he might have destroyed Ulysses without throwing this mountain; but Apollonius is undoubtedly guilty of an absurdity, and one might rather believe that he would sink the earth at every step, than run upon the waters with such lightness as not to wet his feet. Virgil has more judiciously applied those lines to Camilla in his *Æneis*.

Again I shov'd her off; our fate to fly,
 Each nerve we stretch, and ev'ry oar we ply.
 Just 'scap'd impending death, when now again 575
 We twice as far had furrow'd back the main,
 Once more I raise my voice; my friends afraid
 With mild entreaties my design dissuade.
 What boots the godless giant to provoke?
 Whose arm may sink us at a single stroke. 580
 Already, when the dreadful rock he threw,
 Old Ocean shook, and back his surges flew.
 The sounding voice directs his aim again;
 The rock o'erwhelms us, and we 'scap'd in vain.

But I, of mind elate, and scorning fear, 585
 Thus with new taunts insult the monster's car.
 Cyclop! if any, pitying thy disgrace,
 Ask who disfigur'd thus that cycless face?
 Say 'twas Ulysses; 'twas his deed, declare,
 Laertes' son, of Ithaca the fair; 590
 Ulysses, far in fighting fields renown'd,
 Before whose arm 'Troy tumbled to the ground.

Th' astonish'd savage with a roar replies:
 Oh heav'ns! oh faith of ancient prophecies!

' — — Mare per medium fluctu suspensa tument
 Ferret iter, celeres nec tingeret æquore plantas.'

The poet expresses the swiftness of Camilla in the nimble flow of the verse, which consists almost entirely of dactyles; and runs off with the utmost rapidity, like the last of those quoted from Apollonius.

This, Telemus Eurymedes foretold, 595
 (The mighty seer who on these hills grew old;
 Skill'd the dark fates of mortals to declare,
 And learn'd in all wing'd omens of the air)
 Long since he menac'd, such was Fate's command;
 And nam'd Ulysses as the destin'd hand. 600
 I deem'd some godlike giant to behold,
 Or lofty hero, haughty, brave, and bold;
 Not this weak pigmy-wretch, of mean design,
 Who not by strength subdu'd me, but by wine.

V. 595. *This, Telemus Eurymedes foretold.*] This incident sufficiently shews the use of that dissimulation which enters into the character of Ulysses: if he had discovered his name, the Cyclops had destroyed him as his most dangerous enemy. Plutarch in his discourse upon Garrulity, commends the fidelity of the companions of Ulysses, who when they were dragged by this giant and dashed against the rock, confessed not a word concerning their lord, and scorned to purchase their lives at the expence of their honesty. Ulysses himself, adds he, was the most eloquent and most silent of men; he knew that a word spoken never wrought so much good, as a word conceal'd; men teach us to speak, but the gods teach us silence; for silence is the first thing that is taught us at our initiation into sacred mysteries; and we find these companions had profited under so great a master in silence as Ulysses.

Ovid relates this prophecy in the story of Polypheme and Galatea.

'Telemus interea Siculum delatus in æquor,
 Telemus Eurymedes, quem nulla fefellerat ales,
 Terribilem Polyphemon adit; lumenque quod unum
 Fronte geris mediâ, rapiet tibi, dixit, Ulysses:
 Risit, et, O vatium stolidissime, falleris, inquit
 Altera jam rapuit.' —

V. 603. *Not this weak pigmy-wretch —*] This is spoken in compliance with the character of a giant; the Phæacians wondered at

But come, accept our gifts, and join to pray 605
Great Neptune's blessing on the wat'ry way:

For his I am, and I the lineage own:

Th' immortal father no less boasts the son.

His pow'r can heal me, and relight my eye;

And only his, of all the gods on high. 610

Oh! could this arm (I thus aloud rejoin'd)
From that vast bulk dislodge thy bloody mind,
And send thee howling to the realms of night!
As sure, as Neptune cannot give thee sight.

Thus I: while raging he repeats his cries, 615
With hands uplifted to the starry skies.

Hear me, oh Neptune! thou whose arms are hurl'd
From shore to shore, and gird the solid world.

the manly stature of Ulysses; Polypheme speaks of him as a dwarf; his rage undoubtedly made him treat him with so much contempt. Nothing in nature can be better imagined than this story of the Cyclops, if we consider the assembly before which it was spoken; I mean the Phæacians, who had been driven from their habitation by the Cyclopcans, as appears from the sixth of the *Odyssey*, and compelled to make a new settlement in their present country: Ulysses gratifies them by shewing what revenge he took upon one of their ancient enemies, and they could not decently refuse assistance to a person who had punished those who had insulted their forefathers.

V. 617. *The prayer of the Cyclops.*] This is a masterpiece of art in Ulysses; he shews Neptune to be his enemy, which might deter the Phæacians from assisting in his transportation, yet brings this very circumstance as an argument to induce them to it. 'O Neptune,' says the Cyclops, 'destroy Ulysses, or if he be fated to return, may it be in a vessel not of his own!' Here he plainly tells the Phæacians that the prayer of Cyclops was almost accomplished, for his

If thine I am, nor thou my birth disown,
 And if th' unhappy Cyclop be thy son; 620
 Let not Ulysses breathe his native air,
 Laertes' son, of Ithaca the fair.

If to review his country be his fate,
 Be it through toils and suff'rings, long and late;
 His lost companions let him first deplore; 625
 Some vessel, not his own, transport him o'er;
 And when at home from foreign suff'rings freed,
 More near and deep, domestic woes succeed!

With imprecations thus he fill'd the air, 630
 And angry Neptune heard the unrighteous pray'r
 A larger rock then heaving from the plain,
 He whirl'd it round: it sung across the main:
 It fell, and brush'd the stern: the billows roar,
 Shake at the weight; and refluent beat the shore.
 With all our force we kept aloof to sea, 635
 And gain'd the island where our vessels lay.
 Our sight the whole collected navy cheer'd,
 Who, waiting long, by turns had hop'd and fear'd.
 There disembarking on the green sea-side,
 We land our cattle, and the spoil divide: 640
 Of these due shares to ev'ry sailor fall;
 The master ram was voted mine by all:

own ships were destroyed by Neptune, and now he was ready to sail in a foreign vessel; by which the whole prayer would be completed. By this he persuades them, that they were the people ordained by the fates to land him in his own country.

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 It fell, and brush'd the stern: the billows roar,
 Shake at the weight, and reflux beat the shore.

With all our force we kept aloof to sea, 635
 And gain'd the island where our vessels lay.
 Our sight the whole collected navy cheer'd,
 Who, waiting long, by turns had hop'd and fear'd.
 There disembarking on the green sea-side,
 We land our cattle, and the spoil divide: 640
 Of these due shares to ev'ry sailor fall;
 The master ram was voted mine by all:

own ships were destroyed by Neptune, and now he was ready to sail
 in a foreign vessel; by which the whole prayer would be completed.
 By this he persuades them, that they were the people ordained by the
 fates to land him in his own country.

And him (the guardian of Ulysses' fate)
 With pious mind to heav'n I consecrate.
 But the great god, whose thunder rends the skies,
 Averse, beholds the smoking sacrifice; 646
 And sees me wand'ring still from coast to coast;
 And all my vessels, all my people, lost!

V. 642. *The master ram was voted mine* —] This perhaps might be a present of honour and distinction: but I should rather take it with Eustathius to be the ram which brought Ulysses out of the den of Polypheme. That hero immediately offers it in sacrifice to Jupiter, in gratitude for his deliverance; an instance of piety to be imitated in more enlightened ages.

The book concludes with a testimony of this hero's humanity; in the midst of the joy for his own safety his generous heart finds room for a tender sentiment for the loss of his companions; both his joys and his sorrows are commendable and virtuous.

Virgil has borrowed this episode of Polyphemus, and inserted it into the third of the *Æneis*. I will not presume to decide which author has the greatest success, they both have their peculiar excellencies. Rapin confesses this episode to be equal to any parts of the *Iliad*, that it is an original, and that Homer introduced that monstrous character to shew the marvellous, and paint it in a new set of colours. Demetrius Phalereus calls it a piece of sublime strangely horrible; and Longinus, even while he is condemning the *Odyssey*, allows this adventure of Polypheme to be very great and beautiful; (for so Monsieur Boileau understands Longinus, though Monsieur Dacier differs from his judgment.) In Homer we find a greater variety of natural incidents than in Virgil, but in Virgil a greater pomp of verse. Homer is not uniform in his description, but sometimes stoops perhaps below the dignity of epic poetry; Virgil walks along with an even, grave, and majestic pace: they both raise our admiration, mixed with delight and terror.

• While thoughtless we, indulge the genial rite,
As plenteous cates and flowing bowls invite ; 650
Till evening Phœbus roll'd away the light :
Stretch'd on the shore in careless ease we rest,
Till ruddy morning purpled o'er the east.
Then from their anchors all our ships unbind,
And mount the decks, and call the willing wind. 655
Now rang'd in order on our banks, we sweep
With hasty strokes the hoarse-resounding deep ;
Blind to the future, pensive with our fears,
Glad for the living, for the dead in tears.



HOMER'S ODYSSEY.

Book 10.

THE
TENTH BOOK
OF THE
ODYSSEY.

THE ARGUMENT.

ADVENTURES WITH ÆOLUS, THE LESTRIGONS, AND CIRCE.

ULYSSES arrives at the island of Æolus, who gives him prosperous winds, and incloses the adverse ones in a bag, which his companions untying, they are driven back again, and rejected. Then they sail to the Lestrigons, where they lose eleven ships, and, with one only remaining, proceed to the island of Circe. Eurylochus is sent first with some companions, all which, except Eurylochus, are transformed into swine. Ulysses then undertakes the adventure, and by the help of Mercury, who gives him the herb moly, overcomes the enchantress, and procures the restoration of his men. After a year's stay with her, he prepares at her instigation for his voyage to the infernal shades.

THE
ODYSSEY.

BOOK X.*

At length we reach'd Æolia's sea-girt shore,
Where great Hippotades the sceptre bore,
A floating isle! High-rais'd by toil divine,
Strong walls of brass the rocky coast confine.

* Poetry is a mixture of history and fable; the foundation is historical, because the poet does not entirely neglect truth; the rest is fabulous, because naked truth would not be sufficiently surprising; for the marvellous ought to take place, especially in epic poetry. But it may be asked, does not Homer offend against all degrees of probability in these episodes of the Sirens, Scylla and Charybdis, Cyclops and Antiphates? How are these incredible stories to be reduced into the bounds of probability? It is true, the marvellous ought to be used in epic poetry; but ought it to transgress all power of belief? Aristotle in his Art of Poetry lays down a rule to justify these incidents: 'A poet,' says that author, 'ought to prefer things impossible, provided they are probable, before things possible, that are nevertheless incredible,' chap. xv. This rule is not without obscurity; but Monsieur Dacier has explained it in his annotations upon that author: a thing may be impossible, and yet probable: thus when the poet introduces a deity, any incident humanly impossible receives a full probability by being ascribed to the skill and power of a god: it is thus we justify the story of the transformation of the ship of the Phæacians

•

Six blooming youths, in private grandeur bred, 5
And six fair daughters, grac'd the royal bed:

into a rock, and the fleet of Æneas into sea nymphs. But such relations ought not to be too frequent in a poem; for it is an established rule, that all incidents which require a divine probability only, should be so disengaged from the action, that they may be subtracted from it without destroying it; for instance, if we omit the transformation of the ship, the action of the *Odyssey* will retain the same perfection. And therefore those episodes which are necessary, and make essential parts of the poem, ought to be grounded upon human probability; now the episodes of Circe, Polypheme, the Sirens, &c. are necessary to the action of the *Odyssey*: but will any man say they are within the bounds of human probability? How then shall we solve this difficulty? Homer artificially has brought them within the degrees of it; he makes Ulysses relate them before a credulous and ignorant assembly; he lets us into the character of the Phæacians, by saying they were a very dull nation, in the sixth book,

‘Where never science rear’d her laurel’d head.’

It is thus the poet gives probability to his fables, by reciting them to a people who believed them, and who through a laziness of life were fond of romantic stories; he adapts himself to his audience, and yet even here he is not unmindful of his more intelligent readers: he gives them (observes Bossu) in these fables all the pleasure that can be reaped from physical or moral truths, disguised under miraculous allegories, and by this method reconciles them to poetical probability.

There are several heads to which probability may be reduced; either to divinity, and then nothing is improbable, for every thing is possible to a deity; or to our ideas of things whether true or false: thus in the descent of Ulysses into hell, there is not one word of probability or historic truth; but if we examine it by the ideas that the old world entertained of hell, it becomes probable; or lastly, we may have respect to vulgar opinion or fame; for a poet is at liberty to relate a falsehood, provided it be commonly believed to be true. We might have recourse to this last rule, which is likewise laid down by

These sons their sisters wed, and all remain
 Their parents' pride, and pleasure of their reign.

Aristotle, to vindicate the *Odyssey*, if there were occasion for it; for in all ages such fables have found belief.

I will only add, that Virgil has given a sanction to these stories, by inserting them in his *Æneis*; and Horace calls them by the remarkable epithet of *speciosus miracles*.

‘ — — Ut speciosa dehinc miracula promat,
 Antiphaten, Scyllamque et cum Cyclope Charybdin.’

Longinus calls these fables dreams, but adds, that they are the dreams of Jupiter; he likewise blames those episodes, because in all of them there is much more fable and narration than action: which criticism may perhaps be too severe, if we consider that past adventures are here brought into present use, and though they be not actions, yet they are the representations of actions, agreeable to the nature of episodes.

It may be questioned if Virgil is so happy in the choice of the audience to which he relates many of these fables; the Carthaginians were not ignorant like the Phæacians: from whence then do his stories receive their probability? it is not so easy to answer this objection, unless we have recourse to common fame: Virgil was not the author of them, Homer had established them, and brought them into fame, so that Virgil had common opinion to vindicate him, joined with Homer's authority.

V. 1. *We reach'd Æolia's shore.*] It is difficult to distinguish what is truth from what is fiction in this relation: Diodorus, who was a Sicilian, speaks of Æolus, and refers to this passage: ‘ This is that Æolus,’ says he, ‘ who entertained Ulysses, in his voyages: he is reported to have been a pious and just prince, and given to hospitality, and therefore φιλαῖς ἀθανάτοισι, as Homer expresses it.’ But whence has the fable of his being the governor of the winds taken its foundation? Eustathius tells us, that he was a very wise man, and one who from long observation could foretell what weather was like to follow: others say he was an astronomer, and studied chiefly the nature of the winds; and as Atlas from his knowledge in astrology was said to sus-

All day they feast, all day the bowls fly round,
And joy and music through the isle resound: 10

tain the heavens; so Æolus, from his experience and observation, was fabled to be the ruler or disposer of the winds. But what explication can be given of this bag, in which he is said to bind the winds? Eratosthenes, continues Eustathius, said pleasantly, that we shall then find the places where Ulysses voyaged, when we have discovered the artist, or cobbler, *τον σκυττα*, who sewed up this bag of the winds. But the reason of the fiction is supposed to be this. Æolus taught the use and management of sails, and having foretold Ulysses from what quarter the winds would blow, he may be said to have gathered them into a kind of enclosure, and retained them as use should require. Diodorus explains it a little differently, lib. v. *Προς δε ταῖς τῶν τῶν ἰσθμῶν χρεῖαν τοῖς ναυτικοῖς ἐπεισηγησασθαι, καὶ ἀπο τῆς τε πυρὸς προσήμασις παρατηρητότα, προλαβεῖν τῆς εἰχωρίας ἀνιμῆς εὐστοχῶς, ἐξ ἑ ταμίαν ἀνεμῶν μῦθος ἀνεδειξε;* that is, 'He taught the use of sails, and having learned from observing the bearing of the smoke and fires (of those Vulcanian islands) what winds would blow, he usually foretold them with exactness, and from hence he is fabled to be the disposer of the winds.' The words of Varro, quoted by Servius, are to the same purpose: 'Varro autem dicit hunc insularum regem fuisse, ex quarum nebulis et fumo Vulcaniæ insulæ prædicens futura flabra ventorum, ab imperitis visus est ventos suâ potestate retinere.'

Polybius will not admit that this story of Æolus is entirely fable; and Strabo is of the same opinion, that Ulysses was in the Sicilian seas; and that there was such a king as Æolus, he affirms to be truth; but that he met with such adventures is, in the main, fiction. There may another reason, as Eustathius observes, be given for the fiction of binding up the winds in a bag: they who practised the art of incantation or charms, made use of the skin of a dolphin, and pretended by certain ceremonies to bind or loose the winds as they pleased; and this practice is a sufficient ground to build upon in poetry.

The solution also of Bochart is worth our notice: Homer borrowed the word *Αἰολός* from the Phœnician *Aol*, which signifies a whirlwind or tempest, from whence the Greeks formed their word *αέλλα*; the

At night each pair on splendid carpets lay,
And crown'd with love the pleasures of the day.

Phœnicians observing the king of this island to be very expert in foretelling the winds, called him king Aolin, or king of the winds and storms; from hence Homer formed a proper name, and called him Αἰολός. It must be confessed, that this solution is ingenious, and not without an appearance of probability.

But having laid together what may be said in vindication of this story of Æolus, justice requires that I should not suppress what has been objected against it by no less a critic than Longinus: he observes that a genius naturally lofty sometimes falls into trifling; an instance of this, adds he, is what Homer says of the bag wherein Æolus enclosed the winds. Cap. vii. *περι υψους*.

V. 3. *A floating isle*—] The word in the original is *πλωτή*: some take it, as Eustathius remarks, for a proper name; but Aristarchus believes Homer intended to express by it a floating island, that was frequently removed by concussions and earthquakes, for it is seen sometimes on the right, at other times on the left hand: the like has been said of Delos; and Herodotus thus describes the island Echemis in the Egyptian seas. Dionysius, in his *περιηγησις*, affirms, that this island is not called by the name of *πλωτή*, by reason of its floating, but because it is an island of fame, and much sailed unto, or *πλωτή* by navigators; that is, *πλεομένη*, or *εν τωποις πλεομενοις κειμένη*, or lying in seas of great navigation: but perhaps the former opinion of Aristarchus may be preferable, as it best contributes to raise the wonder and admiration of the credulous ignorant Phœnicians, which was the sole intention of Ulysses.

These islands were seven in number (but eleven at this day), Strongyle, Hiera, Didyme, Hicesia, Lipara, Erycodes, and Phœnicodes, all lying in the Sicilian seas, as Diodorus Siculus testifies; but differs in the name of one of the islands.

Strabo is of opinion, that the island called by Homer, the Æolian, is Strongyle; *Η δε Στρογγυλη, εστι διαπυρος, τω φεγγει πλεονεκτεσα, ενλαθα δε τον Αιολον οικησαι φασι*. 'This island Strongyle abounds with subterraneous fires, &c. and here Æolus is said to have reigned.' Pliny agrees with Strabo, lib. iii. but Dacier understands it to be Li-

This happy port affords our wand'ring fleet
A month's reception, and a safe retreat.

para, according to Virgil, *Æn.* lib. viii. but in reality the seven were all called the *Æolian* islands.

‘*Insula Sicanium juxta latus, Æoliamque
Erigitur Liparen, fumantibus ardua saxis.*’

But why is it fabled to be surrounded with a wall of brass? Eustathius says, that this may proceed from its being almost inaccessible; but this reason is not sufficient to give foundation to such a fiction. Dacier observes that it is thus described, because of the subterranean fires, which from time to time break out from the entrails of this island. Aristotle speaking of Lipara, which is the most considerable of the *Æolian* islands, thus describes it; ‘all night long the island Lipara appears enlightened with fires.’ The same relation agrees with Strongyle, called Strombolo at this day.

I will take the liberty to propose a conjecture, which may perhaps not unhappily give a reason of this fiction of the wall of brass, from this description of Aristotle: all night fires appear (says that author) from this island, and these fires falling upon the seas, might cast a ruddy reflection round the island, which to navigators might look like a wall of brass enclosing it. This is but a conjecture drawn from appearances; but to write according to appearances is allowable in poetry, where a seeming or a real truth may be used indifferently.

V. 5. *Six blooming youths — and six fair daughters.*] Diodorus Siculus mentions the names of the six sons of *Æolus*, but is silent concerning his daughters, and therefore others, who can find mysteries in the plainest description, assure us, that this is not to be understood historically, but allegorically: *Æolus* represents the year, his twelve children are the twelve months, six of which are female, to denote those six months in which the earth brings forth her fruits; by his six sons the other months are understood, in which the seed is sown, or in which the herbs, fruits, &c. are nourished in order to production; these may therefore be called males. But this is to darken an author into mystery, not to explain him. Dacier gives us another allegorical interpretation: the poet makes him the governor of the

Full oft the monarch urg'd me to relate 15
 The fall of Ilion, and the Grecian fate;
 Full oft I told: at length for parting mov'd;
 The king with mighty gifts my suit approv'd.

winds, and gives him twelve children, these denote the twelve principal winds; half of which children are males, half females; the males denote the winter winds, which as it were brood upon the earth, and generate its increase: the females those warmer seasons of the year, when the more prolific winds blow, and make the earth teem with fruitfulness: these children of Æolus are in continual feasts in his palace; that is, the winds are continually fed by the exhalations from the earth, which may be called their food or nourishment: the brothers and sisters intermarry; this denotes the nature of the winds, which blow promiscuously, and one wind unites itself with another from all quarters of the world indifferently: the brothers and sisters are said to sleep by night together; that is, the winds are usually still and calm, and as it were rest together, at that season. But what occasion is there to have recourse to an uncertain allegory, when such great names as Polybius, Strabo, and Diodorus assure us, that this relation is in part true history; and if there was really such a king as Æolus, why might he not be a father of six sons and as many daughters? I should prefer a plain history to a dark allegory.

V. 9. *All day they feast, — — —*

— — and music through the isle resounds.]

Homer was not unacquainted with the wonders related of this island Ilipe. 'In this island,' says Aristotle, 'a monument is reported to be, of which they tell miracles: they assure us that they hear issuing from it the sound of timbrels or cymbals, plainly and distinctly.' It is easy to perceive that this is founded upon the noise the fires make

The adverse winds in leathern bags he brac'd,
 Compress'd their force, and lock'd each struggling blast;
 For him the mighty sire of gods assign'd 21
 The tempest's lord, the tyrant of the wind;
 His word alone the list'ning storms obey,
 To smooth the deep, or swell the foamy sea.
 These in my hollow ship the monarch hung, 25
 Securely fetter'd by a silver thong;
 But Zephyrus exempt, with friendly gales
 He charg'd to fill, and guide the swelling sails:
 Rare gift! but oh, what gift to fools avails!

Nine prosp'rous days we ply'd the lab'ring oar; 30
 The tenth presents our welcome native shore:
 The hills display the beacon's friendly light,
 And rising mountains gain upon our sight.

went to find out the Cyclops: she found them in Lipara, for that is the name the isle now bears, but anciently it was called Meligounis; they were labouring a huge mass of red hot iron, &c. So that Homer is not all invention, but adapts his poetry to tradition and ancient story. DACIER.

V. 32. *The hills display the beacon's friendly light.*] Eustathius observes, that these fires were a kind of beacons kept continually burning to direct navigators; the smoke gave notice by day, the light of the flame by night. Ithaca was environed with rocks, and consequently there was a necessity for this care, to guide seafaring men to avoid those rocks, and to point out the places of landing with security.

But is it not an imputation to the wisdom of Ulysses, to suffer himself to be surprised with sleep, when he was almost ready to enter the ports of his own country? And is it not probable that the joy he must be supposed to receive at the sight of it, should induce him to a few hours watchfulness? It is easier to defend his sleeping here, than

Then first my eyes, by watchful toils oppress,
 •Comply'd to take the balmy gifts of rest; 35
 Then first my hands did from the rudder part,
 (So much the love of home possess'd my heart)
 When lo! on board a fond debate arose;
 What rare device those vessels might enclose?
 What sum, what prize from Æolus I brought? 40
 Whilst to his neighbour each express'd his thought.

Say, whence, ye gods, contending nations strive
 Who most shall please, who most our hero give?
 Long have his coffers groan'd with Trojan spoils;
 Whilst we, the wretched partners of his toils, 45
 Reproach'd by want, our fruitless labours mourn,
 And only rich in barren fame return.
 Now Æolus, ye see, augments his store;
 But come, my friends, these mystic gifts explore.
 They said: and (oh curs'd fate!) the thongs unbound!
 The gushing tempest sweeps the ocean round; 51

in the thirteenth of the *Odyssey*: the poet very judiciously tells us, that Ulysses for nine days together almost continually waked and took charge of the vessel, and the word *νεκυρωτα* shews that nature was wearied out, and that he fell into an involuntary repose; it can therefore be no diminution to his character to be forced to yield to the calls of nature, any more than it is to be hungry: his prudence and love of his country sufficiently appear from the care he took through the space of nine days to arrive at it; so that this circumstance must be imputed to the infirmity of human nature, and not to a defect of care or wisdom in Ulysses.

V. 50. *They said: and (oh curs'd fate!) the thongs unbound*]
 This relation has been blamed as improbable; what occasion was there

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V. 50. *They said: and (oh curs'd fate!) the thongs unbound*]
 This relation has been blamed as improbable; what occasion was there

Snatch'd in the whirl, the hurry'd navy flew,
 The ocean widen'd, and the shores withdrew.
 Rous'd from my fatal sleep, I long debate
 If still to live, or desp'rate plunge to fate: 55
 Thus doubting, prostrate on the deck I lay,
 Till all the coward thoughts of death gave way.

to unbind the bag, when these companions of Ulysses might have satisfied their curiosity that there was no treasure in it from the lightness of it? But Homer himself obviates this objection, by telling us that Æolus fastened it in the vessel, as Eustathius observes,

Νηι δ' ἐνι γλυφῶρη κατέδεσσι — —

Bossu gives the moral of this fable or allegory, cap. x. lib. i. By the winds enclosed in the bag, into which the companions of Ulysses were so unwise as to pry, is to be understood, that we ought not to intrude into those mysteries of government which the prince intends to keep secret: the tempests and confusions raised by the loosing the winds, represent the mischiefs and disorders that arise from such a vain curiosity in the subject: a wise people permit the winds to rest without molestation, and satisfy themselves with those that the prince is pleased to release, and believe them to be the most proper and useful. But whatever judgment is passed upon this explication, is it certainly an instance of the ill consequences of avarice, and unseasonable curiosity.

V. 55. *If still to live, or desp'rate plunge to fate.*] We ought not to infer from this passage, that Homer thought a person might lawfully take away his own life to avoid the greatest dangers; what Ulysses here speaks arises from the violence of a sudden passion, and gives us a true picture of human nature: the wisest of men are not free from the infirmity of passion, but reason corrects and subdues it. This is the case in the instance before us; Ulysses has so much of the man in him as to be liable to the passion of man; but so much virtue and wisdom as to restrain and govern it.

Meanwhile our vessels plough the liquid plain,
 And soon the known Æolian coast regain,
 Our groans the rocks remurmur'd to the main. 60
 We leap'd on shore, and with a scanty feast
 Our thirst and hunger hastily repress'd;
 That done, two chosen heralds straight attend
 Our second progress to my royal friend;
 And him amidst his jovial sons we found; 65
 The banquet steaming, and the goblets crown'd:
 There humbly stopp'd with conscious shame and awe,
 Nor nearer than the gate presum'd to draw.
 But soon his sons their well-known guest descry'd,
 And starting from their couches loudly cry'd, 70
 Ulysses here! what demon couldst thou meet
 To thwart thy passage and repel thy fleet?
 Wast thou not furnish'd by our choicest care
 For Greece, for home, and all thy soul held dear?
 Thus they; in silence long my fate I mourn'd, 75
 At length these words with accent low return'd.
 Me, lock'd in sleep, my faithless crew bereft
 Of all the blessings of your godlike gift!
 But grant, oh grant our loss we may retrieve:
 A favour you, and you alone can give. 80

Thus I with art to move their pity try'd,
 And touch'd the youths; but their stern sire reply'd,
 Vile wretch, be gone! this instant I command
 Thy fleet accurs'd to leave our hallow'd land.

His baneful suit pollutes these bless'd abodes, 85
Whose fate proclaims him hateful to the gods.

Thus fierce he said: we sighing went our way,
And with desponding hearts put off to sea.
The sailors spent with toils their folly mourn,
But mourn in vain; no prospect of return. 90
Six days and nights a doubtful course we steer,
The next proud Lamos' stately tow'rs appear,
And Læstrigonia's gates arise distinct in air.
The shepherd quitting here at night the plain,
Calls, to succeed his cares, the watchful swain; 95

V. 83. *Woe wretch, be gone! —*] This inhospitable character of Æolus may seem contrary to the humane disposition which Homer before ascribed to him; he therefore tells us, that Ulysses appeared to him to be an object of divine vengeance, and that to give him assistance would be to act against the will of the gods. But, observes Eustathius, is not this an ill chosen relation to be made to the Phæacians, as the critics have remarked, and might it not deter them from assisting a man whom Æolus had rejected as an enemy to the gods? He answers, that it was evident to the Phæacians, that Ulysses was no longer under the displeasure of heaven, that the imprecations of Polypheme were fulfilled; he being to be transported to his own country by strangers, according to his prayer in the ninth of the Odyssey, and consequently the Phæacians have nothing to fear from the assistance which they lend Ulysses.

V. 94. *The shepherd quitting here at night the plain, &c.*] This passage has been thought to be very difficult; but Eustathius makes it intelligible: the land of the Læstrigons was fruitful, and fit for pasturage; it was the practice to tend the sheep by day, and the oxen by night; for it was infested by a kind of fly that was very grievous to the oxen by day, whereas the wool of the sheep defended them from it: and therefore the shepherds drove their oxen to pasture by night. If the same shepherd who watched the sheep by day, could

But he that scorns the chains of sleep to wear,
And adds the herdsman's to the shepherd's care,

pass the night without sleep, and attend the oxen, he performed a double duty, and consequently merited a double reward. Homer says, that the ways of the night and day were near to each other, that is, the pastures of the sheep and oxen, and the ways that led to them were adjacent; for the shepherd that drove his flocks home, (or *εισελαων*, as Homer expresses it,) could call to the herdsman, who drove his herds to pasture, or *εξελαων*, and be heard with ease, and therefore the roads must be adjoining.

Crates gives us a very different interpretation: he asserts that Homer intended to express the situation of the Læstrigons, and affirms that they lay under the head of the dragon, *Κεφαλην δρακοντος* (which Dacier renders the tail of the dragon), according to Aratus,

— — *ηχιμφο (κεφαλη) απραι*
Μισγογλαι δυσιες, και αναβολαι αλληλησιν.

which Tully thus translates,

‘*Hoc caput hic paullum sese subitoque recondit*
Ortus ubi atque obitus partem admiscentur in unam.’

If this be true, the poet intended to express that there was scarce any night at all among the Læstrigons, according to that of Manilius,

‘*Vixque ortus, occasus erit*’ — —

But how will this agree with the situation of the Læstrigons, who were undoubtedly Sicilians, according to the direct affirmation of Thucydides, lib. vi. of his history? Besides, if Læstrigonia lay under the head of the dragon, Ulysses must have spent seven months, instead of seven days, in sailing from the Æolian islands to that country. Neither is there any necessity to have recourse to this solution; for what signifies the length or shortness of the day to the double wages of the shepherds, when it was paid to him who took upon him a double charge of watching the whole day and night, which comprehends the space of four and twenty hours; which alone, whether the

So near the pastures, and so short the way,
His double toils may claim a double pay,
And join the labours of the night and day. 100

greater part of it was by night or day, entitled the shepherd to a double reward? I therefore should rather choose the former interpretation, with which Didymus agrees. *Νυκτεριναι, και ημεριναι νομαι εδγυς εισι της πολεως;* that is, 'both the night pastures, and those of the day, are adjacent to the city.'

It is evident that the Læstrigons also inhabited Formiæ, a city of Campania near Cajeta: thus Horace, lib. iii. Ode 17.

'Æli vetusto nobilis ab Iamo —
Auctore ab illo ducit originem
Qui Formiarum mœnia dicitur
Princeps' —

It was called Hormiæ, according to Strabo, *φορμιαί, Λακωνικον κλισμα, Ορμιαί λεγομενον δια το ευορμον;* that is, 'Formiæ was built by a Læconian, called also Hormiæ, from its being an excellent station for ships.' Tully had this place in view in his epistle to Atticus, lib. ii. Epist. 13. 'Si vero in hanc *τηλεπουλον*, veneris *λαιοτρύγονην*, Formias dico.' And Pliny to the same purpose, lib. iii. cap. 5. 'Oppidum Formiæ, Hormiæ aut dictum, ut existimavêre, antiqua Læstrigonum sedes.' But how will this agree with Homer, who places them in Sicily, whilst Tully and Pliny place them in Campania in Italy?

Dacier answers, that they were originally Sicilians, as appears from Pliny, lib. iii. cap. 8. 'Flumina, Symæthus, Terias; intus, Læstrigoniî campi; oppidum, Leontini.' And why might not these Læstrigons, or a colony of them, leave Sicily to settle in Italy, as it is evident the Phæacians had done, and fixed in Corcyra? Bochart's opinion concerning this nation is not to be neglected; the words Læstrigons and Leontines are of the same import; Læstrigon is a Phœnician name, '*Lais tircam*,' that is, 'a devouring lion;' this is rendered literally by the Latin word *Leontinum*, and both denote the savage and Leonine disposition of this people; the word *Lamus* is also

Within a long recess a bay there lies,
 • Edg'd round with cliffs, high pointing to the skies;
 The jutting shores that swell on either side
 Contract its mouth, and break the rushing tide.
 Our eager sailors seize the fair retreat, 105
 And bound within the port their crowded fleet:
 For here retir'd the sinking billows sleep,
 And smiling calmness silver'd o'er the deep.
 I only in the bay refus'd to moor,
 And fix'd, without, my halsers to the shore. 110

From thence we climb'd a point, whose airy brow
 Commands the prospect of the plains below:
 No tracks of beasts, or signs of men we found,
 But smoky volumes rolling from the ground.

of Phœnician extract: Laham, or Lahama, signifies a devourer; from hence probably was derived that Lamia, who devoured young infants, mentioned by Horace in his Art of Poetry.

'Nec pransæ Lamiæ vivum puerum extrahat alvo.'

We are informed that there was a queen of Libya of that name, by Diodorus Siculus; she was a person of great beauty, but of great barbarity.

V. 109. *I only in the bay refus'd to moor.*] It may appear at the first view, that Ulysses took more care of himself than of his companions; and it may be asked, why did he not restrain them from entering the bay, when his caution plainly shews that he was apprehensive of danger? Had he more fear than the rest of the company? No; but a greater foresight: a wise man provides as far as lies within his power against all contingencies, and the event shews, that his companions were rash, and he wise to act with so much circumspection; they stay'd not for command, and therefore were justly punished for acting precipitately without the direction of their general and king.

Two with our herald thither we command, 115
 With speed to learn what men possess'd the land.
 They went, and kept the wheel's smooth beaten road
 Which to the city drew the mountain wood;
 When lo! they met, beside a crystal spring,
 The daughter of Antiphates the king; 120
 She to Artacia's silver streams came down,
 (Artacia's streams alone supply the town:)

V. 120. *The daughter of Antiphates, &c.*] It is not evident from whence Ulysses had the knowledge of these particulars; the persons whom he sent to search the land perished in the attempt; or were destroyed with the fleet by the Læstrigons: how then could this relation be made to Ulysses? It is probable that he had his information from Circe or Calypso, for Circe in the sequel of the *Odyssey* tells Ulysses, that she was acquainted with all the sufferings that he had undergone by sea; and if she, as a goddess, knew his adventures, why might she not relate to him these particulars? Homer a little lower tells us, that the Læstrigons transfix'd (*παίοντες*) the companions of Ulysses, and then carried them away on their weapons like so many fishes; others prefer *εισφέρειν*, that is, connecting them together like a range of fishes; both which very well express the prodigious strength of these giants: others choose the word *ασπασσόμενοι*, or, 'they eat them yet alive (*palpitantes*) like fishes.' The preference is submitted to the reader. EUSTATHIUS.

I will only add, that possibly the relation of the barbarity of Polypheme, and Antiphates, with respect to their eating the flesh of men, may not be entirely fabulous: modern history assures us, that savages have been found in parts of the world lately discovered, who eat the bodies of their enemies: it is therefore no wonder that the more polite and civilized nations of antiquity, looked upon such men as monsters, and that their poets painted them as such, or perhaps aggravated the *fierce*, or fierceness of their features, struck with horror at their brutal inhumanity.

The damsel they approach, and ask'd what race
 "The people were? who monarch of the place?
 With joy the maid th' unwary strangers heard, 125
 And shew'd them where the royal dome appear'd.
 They went; but as they ent'ring saw the queen
 Of size enormous, and terrific mien,
 (Not yielding to some bulky mountain's height)
 A sudden horror struck their aching sight, 130
 Swift at her call her husband scour'd away
 To wreak his hunger on the destin'd prey;
 One for his food the raging glutton slew,
 But two rush'd out, and to the navy flew.
 Balk'd of his prey, the yelling monster flies, 135
 And fills the city with his hideous cries;
 A ghastly band of giants hear the roar,
 And pouring down the mountains, crowd the shore.
 Fragments they rend from off the craggy brow,
 And dash the ruins on the ships below: 140
 The crackling vessels burst; hoarse groans arise,
 And mingled horrors echo to the skies;
 The men, like fish, they stuck upon the flood,
 And cram'd their filthy throats with human food.
 Whilst thus their fury rages at the bay, 145
 My sword our cables cut, I call'd to weigh;
 And charg'd my men, as they from fate would fly,
 Each nerve to strain, each bending oar to ply.
 The sailors catch the word, their oars they seize,
 And sweep with equal strokes the smoky seas; 150

Clear of the rocks th' impatient vessel flies;
 Whilst in the port each wretch encumber'd dies.
 With earnest haste my frightened sailors press,
 While kindling transports glow'd at our success;
 But the sad fate that did our friends destroy 155
 Cool'd ev'ry breast, and damp'd the rising joy.

Now dropp'd our anchors in th' Ææan bay,
 Where Circe dwelt, the daughter of the day;

V. 158. *Where Circe dwelt.*] Hesiod in his Theogony agrees with Homer as to the genealogy of Circe and Æetes.

Πελίω δ' ἀκαμανί τ' αὖτε κλυτὰν ὤκεανιν
 Περσέης, Κίρκην τε καὶ Λιγύην βασιλῆα.

That is, 'Perseis the daughter of Oceanus bore to Phœbus, Circe and king Æetes.' But why are they fabled to be the offspring of the sun? Eustathius answers, either from their high birth, as the great personages of antiquity were called *Διογενεῖς*, or the sons of Jupiter, and the sun in the ancient mythology represented that deity; or from their extraordinary beauty, which might be compared to the sun, or from their illustrious actions. But perhaps the whole might be derived from the way of speaking among the Orientals; at this day we are informed from the best historians, that such language prevails in the eastern countries, and kings and great personages are called the brothers or offspring of the sun.

This Ææa is a mountain or promontory in Italy: perhaps originally an island, and still keeping the resemblance of it. Thus Propertius, *Gothicorum*, lib. i. 'Cerceium haud modico tractu in mare porrectum insulæ speciem fert, tam præternavigantibus quam terrestri itinere prætereuntibus:' and Strabo, lib. v. *Κίρκαιον ὁρῶν νησιαζόν θάλαττῃ τε καὶ εἰλεσι*. But is the relation that Homer makes of this island, and of Circe, agreeable to truth? Undoubtedly it is not; but Homer was very well acquainted with the story of Medea, and applies what was reported of that enchantress to Circe, and gives the name of

Her mother Persè, of old Ocean's strain,
 'Thus from the sun descended, and the main; 160
 (From the same lineage stern Æetes came,
 The far-fam'd brother of th' enchantress dame)
 Goddess, and queen, to whom the pow'rs belong
 Of dreadful magic, and commanding song.
 Some god directing, to this peaceful bay 165
 Silent we came, and melancholy lay,
 Spent and o'erwatch'd. Two days and nights roll'd on,
 And now the third succeeding morning shone.
 I climb'd a cliff, with spear and sword in hand,
 Whose ridge o'erlook'd a shady length of land; 170

Ææa to the island of Circe, in resemblance to *Æa*, a city of Colchos, the country of Medea and *Æetes*. That Homer was not a stranger to the story of Medea is evident, for he mentions the ship *Argo* in the twelfth *Odyssey*, in which Jason sailed to Colchos, where Medea fell in love with him; so that though Circe be a fabled deity, yet what Homer says of her was applicable to the character of another person, and consequently a just foundation for a story in poetry. With this opinion Strabo agrees.

V. 169. *I climb'd a cliff.*] Scaliger, lib. v. of his *Poetics*, observes, that there is a general resemblance between Ulysses in Homer, and *Æneas* in Virgil, and that *Æneas* acts in the same manner as Ulysses.

' — — exire, locosque
 Explorare novos, quas vento accesserit oras,
 Qui teneant, (nam inculta videt) hominesne feræne
 Quærere constituit.'

That critic remarks, that though the attitudes of the two heroes are the same, yet they are drawn by Virgil with a more masterly hand: 'Fusior et latior Homerus invenietur, pictior Virgilius et numeris astrictior.'

To learn if aught of mortal works appear,
Or cheerful voice of mortal strike the ear?
From the high point I mark'd, in distant view,
A stream of curling smoke, ascending blue,
And spiry tops, the tufted trees above, 175
Of Circe's palace bosom'd in the grove.

Thither to haste, the region to explore,
Was first my thought: but speeding back to shore
I deem'd it best to visit first my crew,
And send out spies the dubious coast to view. 180
As down the hill I solitary go,
Some pow'r divine who pities human woe
Sent a tall stag, descending from the wood,
To cool his fervour in the crystal flood;
Luxuriant on the wave-worn bank he lay, 185
Stretch'd forth, and panting in the sunny ray.
I launch'd my spear, and with a sudden wound
Transpierc'd his back, and fix'd him to the ground.
He falls, and mourns his fate with human cries:
Through the wide wound the vital spirit flies, 190
I drew, and casting on the river side
The bloody spear, his gather'd feet I ty'd
With twining osiers which the bank supply'd.

Ulysses himself here takes a general view of the island, but sends his companions for a more particular information; this was necessary to introduce the following story, and give it an air of probability; if he had made the experiment in his own person, his virtue would have been proof against the sorceries of Circe, and consequently there could not have been room for a description of her enchantments.

An ell in length the pliant wisp I weav'd,
 'And the huge body on my shoulders heav'd: 195
 Then leaning on the spear with both my hands,
 Upbore my load, and press'd the sinking sands
 With weighty steps, till at the ship I threw
 The welcome burden, and bespoke my crew.

Cheer up, my friends! it is not yet our fate 200
 To glide with ghosts through Pluto's gloomy gate.
 Food in the desert land, behold! is giv'n,
 Live, and enjoy the providence of heav'n.

The joyful crew survey his mighty size,
 And on the future banquet feast their eyes, 205
 As huge in length extended lay the beast;
 Then wash their hands, and hasten to the feast.
 There, till the setting sun roll'd down the light,
 They sat indulging in the genial rite.
 When ev'ning rose, and darkness cover'd o'er 210
 The face of things, we slept along the shore.
 But when the rosy morning warm'd the east,
 My men I summon'd, and these words address.

Followers and friends; attend what I propose:
 Ye sad companions of Ulysses' woes! 215
 We know not here what land before us lies,
 Or to what quarter now we turn our eyes,
 Or where the sun shall set, or where shall rise.

V. 218. *Or where the sun shall set, or where shall rise.*] The interpretations of this passage are various; some, says Eustathius, judge these words not to proceed from the ignorance of Ulysses, but that

Here let us think (if thinking be not vain)

If any counsel, any hope remain.

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they are the language of despair suggested by his continual calamities: for how could Ulysses be ignorant of the east or west, when he saw the sun rise and set every day? Others understand it to signify, that he was ignorant of the clime of the world (οὐχ κοσμικὸς κλίματις) in which this island lay. Strabo was of opinion, that the appearances of the heavenly bodies, as the stars, &c. were different in this island from the position which he had ever before observed in any country, and therefore he might well confess his ignorance, and express his concern for his almost desperate condition. He understands by γῆς all that region through which the sun passes opposite to the north. It is true, that the four quarters of the world may be supposed to be here mentioned by Ulysses; γῆς may express the southern parts through which the sun passes, and ἑσπέρῃ the opposite quarter, which may be said comparatively to be ἑσπέρῃ, or dark? And then the rising and setting of the sun will undeniably denote the eastern and western regions. Spondannus is of opinion, that Homer intended to express the four quarters of the world, otherwise the second verse is a tautology. Dacier calls it an explication of the first description. And indeed the mind of man is apt to dwell long upon any object, by which it is deeply affected, as Ulysses must here be supposed to be, and therefore he might enlarge upon the sentiment advanced in the former line. The meaning then will be this. I know not, says that hero, where this island lies, whether east or west, where the sun rises, or where he sets. I should therefore understand Ulysses to mean, that he knows not how the island lies with respect to the rest of the world, and especially to Ithaca, his own country. This is evident from his conduct when he sailed from Formiæ, the land of the Læstrigons; for instead of making toward the east, where Ithaca lay, he bore to this island of Circe, which lies on the west of Formiæ.

V. 220. *If any counsel, any hope remain.*] This expression may be thought unworthy of the mouth of an hero, and serve only to cause his companions to despair; but in reality it has a double effect; it gives us a lively picture of human nature, which in the greatest men will shew some degrees of sensibility, and at the same time it arms

Alas! from yonder promontory's brow,
I view'd the coast, a region flat and low;
An isle encircled with the boundless flood;
A length of thickets, and entangled wood.
Some smoke I saw amid the forest rise, 225
And all around it only seas and skies!

With broken hearts my sad companions stood,
Mindful of Cyclops and his human food,
And horrid Læstrigons, the men of blood.
Presaging tears apace began to rain; 230
But tears in mortal miseries are vain.
In equal parts I straight divide my band,
And name a chief each party to command;
I led the one, and of the other side
Appointed brave Eurylochus the guide. 235
Then in the brazen helm the lots we throw,
And fortune casts Eurylochus to go:

his friends against surprise, and sets the danger they are in full before their eyes, that they may proceed with due circumspection. We do not find that Ulysses abandons himself to despair; he still acts like a brave man, but joins wisdom with bravery, and proceeds at once with the caution of a philosopher, and the spirit of an hero.

V. 236. *Then in the brazen helm the lots we throw.*] Dacier is of opinion that Ulysses cast lots out of an apprehension of being disobeyed if he had given positive commands; his companions being so greatly discouraged by the adventures of Polypheme and the Læstrigons. It will be a nobler reason, and more worthy of an hero to say, that Ulysses was so far from declining a common danger, that he submits himself to an equal chance with his companions to undertake it. This expedition appeared very hazardous, and if he had directly commanded a select number of his men to attempt it, they might have

He march'd, with twice eleven in his train:
Pensive they march, and pensive we remain.

The palace in a woody vale they found, 240
High rais'd of stone; a shaded space around:
Where mountain wolves and brindled lions roam,
(By magic tam'd) familiar to the dome.

thought he had exposed them to almost certain destruction; but the contrary conduct takes away this apprehension, and at the same time shews the bravery of Ulysses, who puts himself upon a level with the meanest of his soldiers, and is ready to expose his person to an equality of danger.

Ulysses divides his men into two bodies; each contains two and twenty men: 'this is agreeable, observes Knstathius, to the former account of Homer; each vessel carried fifty men, six out of every one were destroyed by the Ciconians, and therefore forty-four is the exact number, inclusive of himself and the surviving company.

V. 242. *Where mountain wolves and brindled lions, &c.*] Virgil has borrowed almost this whole description of Circe, and, as Scaliger judges, perhaps with good reason, greatly improved it.

' Hinc exaudiri gemitus iræque leonum
Vincla recusantum, et serâ sub nocte rudentum,
Setigerique sues, atque in præsepibus ursi,' &c.

' From hence we heard rebellowing from the main,
The roars of lions that refuse the chain,
The grunts of bristled boars, and groans of bears,
And herds of howling wolves that stun the sailors ears:
These from their caverns, at the close of night,
Fill the sad isle with horror and affright:
Darkling they mourn their fate, whom Circe's pow'r,
That watch'd the moon, and planetary hour,
With words and wicked herbs, from human kind
Had alter'd, and in brutal shapes confin'd.' DRYDEN.

It must be confessed, that 'Iræ leonum vincla recusantum,' and the

With gentle blandishment our men they meet,
And wag their tails, and fawning lick their feet. 245

epithets and short descriptions adapted to the nature of each savage, are beautiful additions. Virgil likewise differs from Homer in the manner of the description: Homer draws the beasts with a gentleness of nature; Virgil paints them with the fierceness of savages. The reason of Homer's conduct is, because they still retained the sentiments of men, in the forms of beasts, and consequently their native tenderness.

There is a beautiful moral couched under this fable or allegory: Homer intended to teach, as Eustathius remarks, that pleasure and sensuality debase men into beasts. Thus Socrates understood it, as Xenophon informs us. Perhaps, adds Dacier, by the fawning wolves and lions that guard the portals of Circe's palace, the poet means to represent the attendants of such houses of debauchery, which appear gentle and courteous, but are in reality of a brutal disposition, and more dangerous than lions. But upon what foundation is this fable built? Many writers inform us, that Circe was a famous courtesan, and that her beauty drew her admirers as it were by enchantment. Thus Horace writes,

‘ — Circes pocula nosti,
Quæ si cum sociis stultus, cupidusque bibisset,
Sub dominâ Meretrice fuisset turpis et excors,
Vixisset canis immundus, vel amica luto sus.’

It is evident, that Ulysses had a very intimate commerce with Circe, for Hesiod writes that he had two sons by her, Agrius and Latinus, who afterwards reigned in Tuscany; other authors call them Nausithous and Telegonus.

Κίρκη δ' Ἡελίῃ θυγάτηρ ὑπεριονίδας
Γείνατ' Ὀδυσσεύῳ ταλίσσιφρον' ἐν φιλοτήλῃ
Ἀγρίον, ἥδε Λατίνον.

Dionysius Halicarnassus and Aristotle mention Telegonus as the son of Circe and Ulysses, who afterwards slew his father with the bone of a fish inadvertently. Thus Horace,

‘ Telegoni juga parricidæ.’

As from some feast a man returning late,
His faithful dogs all meet him at the gate,

But then, is not this intrigue a breach of morality, and conjugal fidelity in that hero? I refer the reader to note on ver. 198 of the fifth book of the *Odyssey*: I shall only add, that the notions of morality are now very different from what they were in former ages. Adultery alone was esteemed criminal, and punished with death by the ancient heathens: concubinage was not only permitted, but thought to be honourable, as appears from the practice, not only of heroes, but even of the pagan deities; and consequently this was the vice of the age, not in particular of Ulysses. But there is a stronger objection against Ulysses, and it may be asked, how is he to be viudicated for wasting no less space than a whole year in dalliance with an harlot? Penelope and his country seem both forgotten, and consequently he appears to neglect his own re-establishment, the chief design of the *Odyssey*: what adds some weight to this observation is, that his companions seem more sensible of his long absence from his country, and regret it more than that hero; for they awake him out of his dream, and entreat him to depart from the island. It is therefore necessary to take away this objection: for if it be unanswerable, Ulysses is guilty of all the miseries of his family and country, by neglecting to redress them by returning, and therefore he must cease to be an hero, and is no longer to be proposed as a pattern of wisdom, and imitation, as he is in the opening of the *Odyssey*. But the stay of Ulysses is involuntary, and consequently irreproachable; he is in the power of a deity, and therefore not capable of departing without her permission: this is evident; for upon the remonstrance made by his companions, he dares not undertake his voyage without her dismissal. His asking consent plainly shews that it was not safe, if practicable, to go away without it; if he had been a free agent, her leave had been unnecessary: it is true, she tells him she will not detain him any longer against his inclinations; but this does not imply that his stay till then had been voluntary, or that he never had entreated to be dismissed before, but rather intimates the contrary: it only shews that now at last she is willing he should go away. But why should Ulysses stand in need of being admonished by his companions?

Rejoicing round, some morsel to receive,
 (Such as the good man ever us'd to give.)
 Domestic thus the grisly beasts drew near; 250
 They gaze with wonder, not unmix'd with fear.
 Now on the threshold of the dome they stood,
 And heard a voice resounding through the wood:
 Plac'd at her loom within, the goddess sung;
 The vaulted roofs and solid pavement rung. 255
 O'er the fair web the rising figures shine,
 Immortal labour! worthy hands divine.
 Polites to the rest the question mov'd
 (A gallant leader, and a man I lov'd).

What voice celestial, chanting to the loom 260
 (Or nymph, or goddess) echoes from the room?
 Say shall we seek access? With that they call;
 And wide unfold the portals of the hall.

Does not this imply that he was unmindful of returning? This is only an evidence that they were desirous to return as well as he; but he makes a wise use of their impatience, and takes an occasion from their importunities to press for an immediate dismissal.

In short, I am not pleading for perfection in the character of Ulysses: human nature allows it not, and therefore it is not to be ascribed to it in poetry. But if Ulysses were here guilty, his character ceases to be of a piece: we no longer interest ourselves in his misfortunes, since they are all owing to his own folly: the nature of the poem requires, that he should be continually endeavouring to restore his affairs: if then he be here sunk into a lethargy, his character is at once lost, his calamities are a just punishment, and the moral of the *Odyssey* is destroyed, which is to shew wisdom and virtue rewarded, and vice and folly punished by the death of the sutors, and the re-establishment of Ulysses.

The goddess rising, asks her guests to stay,
 Who blindly follow where she leads the way. 265
 Eurylochus alone of all the band,
 Suspecting fraud, more prudently remain'd.
 On thrones around with downy cov'ring^s grac'd,
 With semblance fair th' unhappy men she plac'd.
 Milk newly press'd, the sacred flour of wheat, 270
 And honey fresh, and Pramnian wines the treat:
 But venom'd was the bread, and mix'd the bowl,
 With drugs of force to darken all the soul:

V. 272. *But venom'd was the bread, and mix'd the bowl.*] It is an undoubted truth, that Homer ascribes more power to these magical drugs and incantations than they have in reality; but we are to remember that he is speaking before a credulous audience, who readily believed these improbabilities, and at the same time he very judiciously provides for the satisfaction of his more understanding readers, by couching an excellent moral under his fables; viz. that by indulging our appetites we sink below the dignity of human nature, and degenerate into brutality.

I am not in the number of those who believe that there never were any magicians who performed things of an uncommon nature: the story of Jannes and Jambres, of the witch of Endor, and Simon Magus, are undeniable instances of the contrary. Magic is supposed to have been first practised in Egypt, and to have spread afterwards among the Chaldeans: it is very evident that Homer had been in Egypt, where he might hear an account of the wonders performed by it. Dacier is of opinion, that these deluders, or magicians, were mimics of the real miracles of Moses, and that they are described with a wand, in imitation of that great prophet.

But if any person thinks that magic is mere fable, and never had any existence, yet established fame and common opinion justify a poet for using it. What has been more ridiculed than the winds being enclosed in a bag by Æolus, and committed to Ulysses? But as

Soon in the luscious feast themselves they lost,
 And drank oblivion of their native coast. 275
 Instant her circling wand the goddess waves,
 To hogs transforms 'em, and the sty receives.
 No more was seen the human form divine;
 Head, face, and members, bristle into swine:

absurd as this appears, more countries than Lapland pretend to the power of selling a storm or a fair wind at this day, as is notorious from travellers of credit; and perhaps a poet would not even in these ages be thought ridiculous, if speaking of Lapland, he should introduce one of these Veneficas, and describe the ceremonies she used in the performance of her pretended incantations. Milton not unhappily has introduced the imagined power of these Lapland witches into his *Paradise Lost*.

' — — The night-hag, when call'd
 In secret, riding through the air she comes,
 Lur'd with the smell of infant blood, to dance
 With Lapland witches, while the lab'ring moon
 Eclipses at their charms. — —'

In short, Virgil has imitated Homer in all these bold episodes, and Horace calls them the miracles of the *Odyssey*.

V. 278. *No more was seen the human form divine, &c.*] Longinus here reports a criticism of Zoilus; he is very pleasant upon this transformation of the companions of Ulysses, and calls them, 'the squeaking pigs of Homer;' we may gather from this instance the nature of his criticisms, and conjecture that they tended to turn the finest incidents of Homer into ridicule. Burlesque was his talent, and instead of informing the reason by pointing out the errors of the poem, his only aim was to make his readers laugh; but he drew upon himself the indignation of all the learned world: he was known by the name of the vile Thracian slave, and lived in great want and poverty; and posterity prosecutes his memory with the same animosity. The man was really very learned, as Dionysius Halicarnassus informs us: his

Still curs'd with sense, their minds remain alone, 280
 And their own voice affrights them when they groan.
 Meanwhile the goddess in disdain bestows
 The mast and acorn, brutal food! and strows
 The fruits of cornel, as their feast, around;
 Now prone and grov'ling on unsav'ry ground. 285

Eurylochus with pensive steps and slow,
 Aghast returns; the messenger of woe,
 And bitter fate. To speak he made essay,
 In vain essay'd, nor would his tongue obey,
 His swelling heart deny'd the words their way: 290
 But speaking tears the want of words supply,
 And the full soul bursts copious from his eye.
 Affrighted, anxious for our fellows' fates,
 We press to hear what sadly he relates.

We went, Ulysses! (such was thy command).
 Through the lone thicket, and the desert land. 296

morals were never reproached, and yet, as Vitruvius relates, he was crucified by Ptolemy, or, as others write, stoned to death, or burnt alive at Smyrna; so that his only crime was his defamation of Homer: a tragical instance of the great value which was set upon his poetry by antiquity, and of the danger of attacking a celebrated author with malice and envy.

V. 295, &c. *We went, Ulysses! (such was thy command.)* We have here a very lively picture of a person in a great fright, which was admired, observes Eustathius, by the ancients. There is not only a remarkable harmony in the flowing of the poetry, but the very manner of speaking represents the disorder of the speaker; he is in too great an emotion to introduce his speech by any preface, he breaks at once into it, without preparation, as if he could not soon enough deliver his thoughts. Longinus quotes these lines as an instance of the

A palace in a woody vale we found
Brown with dark forests, and with shades around.

great judgment of Homer: there is nothing, says that critic, which gives more life to a discourse, than the taking away the connexions and conjunctions; when the discourse is not bound together and embarrassed, it walks and slides along of itself, and will want very little oftentimes of going faster even than the thought of the orator: thus in Xenophon, 'Joining their bucklers, they gave back, they fought, they slew, they dy'd together;' of the same nature is that of Eurylochus.

'We went, Ulysses — such was thy command —
Access we sought — nor was access deny'd:
Radiant she came — the portals open'd wide, &c.
I only wait behind — of all the train;
I waited long — and ey'd the doors in vain:
The rest are vanish'd — none repass'd the gate.'

These periods thus cut off, and yet pronounced with precipitation, are signs of a lively sorrow; which at the same time hinders, yet forces him to speak.

Many such sudden transitions are to be found in Virgil, of equal beauty with this of Homer:

'Me, me, inquam qui feci, in me convertite tela.'

Here the poet shews the earnestness of the speaker, who is in so much haste to speak, that his thoughts run to the end of the sentence almost before his tongue can begin it. Thus Achæmenides in his flight from the Cyclops,

' — — Per sidera testor,
Per superos, atque hoc cœli spirabile lumen,
Tollite me, Teucri.'

Here the poet makes no connexion with the preceding discourse, but leaves out the *inquit*, to express the precipitation and terror of Achæmenides.

But our countryman Spenser has equalled, if not surpassed, these

A voice celestial echo'd from the dome,
Or nymph, or goddess, chanting to the loom. 300

great poets of antiquity, in painting a figure of Terror in the ninth canto of the *Fairy Queen*, where Sir Trevisan flies from Despair.

' He answer'd nought at all : but adding new
Fear to his first amazement, staring wide
With stony eyes, and heartless hollow hue,
Astonish'd, stood, as one that had espy'd
Infernal furies, with their chains unty'd;
Him yet again, and yet again bespake
The gentle knight ; who nought to him reply'd,
But trembling ev'ry joint did inly quake,
And falt'ring tongue at last, these words seem'd forth to shake,
For God's dear love, Sir Knight, do me not stay,
For lo ! he comes, he comes, fast after me,
Eft looking back, would fain have run away.'

The description sets the figure full before our eyes ; he speaks short, and in broken and interrupted periods, which excellently represent the agony of his thoughts ; and when he is a little more confirmed and emboldened, he proceeds,

' And am I now in safety sure, quoth he,
From him who would have forced me to die ?
And is the point of death now turn'd from me ?
Then I may tell this hapless history.'

We see he breaks out into interrogations, which, as Longinus observes, give great motion, strength, and action to discourse. If the poet had proceeded simply, the expression had not been equal to the occasion ; but by these short questions, he gives strength to it, and shews the disorder of the speaker, by the sudden starts and vehemence of the periods. The whole Canto of Despair is a piece of inimitable poetry ; the picture of Sir Trevisan has a general resemblance to this of Eurylochus, and seems to have been copied after it, as will appear upon comparison.

Access we sought, nor was access deny'd:
 Radiant she came; the portals open'd wide:
 The goddess mild invites the guests to stay:
 They blindly follow where she leads the way.
 I only wait behind, of all the train; 305
 I waited long, and ey'd the doors in vain:
 The rest are vanish'd, none repass'd the gate;
 And not a man appears to tell their fate.
 I heard, and instant o'er my shoulders flung
 The belt in which my weighty falchion hung; 310
 (A beamy blade) then seiz'd the bended bow,
 And bade him guide the way, resolv'd to go.
 He, prostrate falling, with both hands embrac'd
 My knees, and weeping thus his suit address'd.

V. 313. *With both hands embrac'd my knees — —*] The character of Eurylochus, who had married Climene the sister of Ulysses, is the character of a brave man, who being witness to the dreadful fate of his companions is diffident of himself, and judges that the only way to conquer the danger is to fly from it. To fear upon such an occasion, observes Dacier, is not cowardice, but wisdom. But what is more remarkable in this description, is the art of Homer in inserting the character of a brave man under so great a consternation, to set off the character of Ulysses, who knows how at once to be bold and wise; for the more terrible and desperate the adventure is represented by Eurylochus, the greater appears the intrepidity of Ulysses, who trusting to his own wisdom, and the assistance of the gods, has the courage to attempt it. What adds to the merit of the action is, that he undertakes it solely for his companions, as Horace describes him:

' Dum sibi, dum fociis reditum parat, aspera multa
 Pertulit, adversis rerum immersabilis undis.'

O king belov'd of Jove! thy servant spare, 315
 And ah, thyself the rash attempt forbear!
 Never, alas! thou never shalt return,
 Or see the wretched for whose loss we mourn.
 With what remains from certain ruin fly;
 And save the few not fated yet to die. 320

I answer'd stern. Inglorious then remain,
 Here feast and loiter, and desert thy train.
 Alone, unfriended will I tempt my way;
 The laws of fate compel, and I obey.

This said, and scornful turning from the shore 325
 My haughty step, I stalk'd the valley o'er.
 Till now approaching nigh the magic bow'r,
 Where dwelt th' enchantress skill'd in herbs of pow'r;

V. 321. — — *Inglorious then remain,*
Here feast and loiter — —]

This expression is used sarcastically by Ulysses, and in derision of his fears. Dacier remarks, that Ulysses having not seen what is related by Eurylochus, believes his refusal to return proceeds from his faint-heartedness: an instance, adds she, that we frequently form wrong judgments of men's actions, when we are ignorant of the motives of them. I confess I am of opinion, that there is some degree of cowardice in the character of Eurylochus: a man truly brave would not express such confusion and terror, in any extremity; he is not to be inspirited either by Ulysses, or the example of his other companions, as appears from the sequel, insomuch that Ulysses threatens to kill him for a coward; this prevails over his first fears, and he submits to meet a future danger, merely to avoid one that is present. What makes this observation more just is, that we never see a brave man drawn by Homer or Virgil in such faint colours; but they always discover a presence of mind upon all emergencies.

A form divine forth issu'd from the wood,
 (Immortal Hermes with the golden rod) 330
 In human semblance. On his bloomy face
 Youth smil'd celestial, with each op'ning grace.
 He seiz'd my hand, and gracious thus began.
 Ah whither roam'st thou? much-enduring man!
 O blind to fate! what led thy steps to rove 335
 The horrid mazes of this magic grove?
 Each friend you seek in yon enclosure lies,
 All lost their form, and habitants of sties.
 Think'st thou by wit to model their escape?
 Sooner shalt thou, a stranger to thy shape, 340
 Fall prone their equal: first thy danger know,
 Then take the antidote the gods bestow.
 The plant I give through all the direful bow'r
 Shall guard thee, and avert the evil hour.
 Now hear her wicked arts. Before thy eyes 345
 The bowl shall sparkle, and the banquet rise;
 Take this, nor from the faithless feast abstain,
 For temper'd drugs and poisons shall be vain.
 Soon as she strikes her wand, and gives the word,
 Draw forth and brandish thy refulgent sword, 350
 And menace death: those menaces shall move
 Her alter'd mind to blandishment and love.
 Nor shun the blessing proffer'd to thy arms,
 Ascend her bed, and taste celestial charms:
 So shall thy tedious toils a respite find, 355
 And thy lost friends return to human kind.

But swear her first by those dread oaths that tie
 The pow'rs below, the blessed in the sky;
 Lest to thee naked secret fraud be meant,
 Or magic bind thee, cold and impotent. 360

Thus while he spoke, the sov'reign plant he drew,
 Where on th' all-bearing earth unmark'd it grew,

V. 361. — — *The sov'reign plant he drew,*

Where on th' all-bearing earth unmark'd it grew, &c.]

This whole passage is to be understood allegorically. Mercury is Reason, he being the god of science: the plant which he gives as a preservative against incantation is instruction; the root of it is black, the flower white and sweet; the root denotes that the foundation or principles of instruction appear obscure and bitter, and ~~are~~ distasteful at first, according to that saying of Plato, 'The beginnings of instruction are always accompanied with reluctance and pain.' The flower of Moly is white and sweet; this denotes that the fruits of instruction are sweet, agreeable, and nourishing. Mercury gives this plant; this intimates, that all instruction is the gift of heaven: Mercury brings it not with him, but gathers it from the place where he stands, to shew that wisdom is not confined to places, but that every where it may be found, if heaven vouchsafes to discover it, and we are disposed to receive and follow it. Thus Isocrates understands the allegory of Moly; he adds, Πικραν ειναι ριζαν αυτης, το δε Μωλυ ανθ λευκον καλα γαλα, δια την τε τελος παιδειας λαμπροτητα, ηδη και το ηδυ και τροφιμον. The root of Moly is bitter, but the flower of it white as milk, to denote the excellency of instruction, as well as the pleasure and utility of it in the end. He further illustrates the allegory, by adding Καρπες της παιδειας ει και μη γαλακτι ικελεις, αλλα γλυκαις, &c. That is, 'the fruits of instruction are not only white as milk, but sweet, though they spring from a bitter root.' EUSTATHIUS.

Maximus Tyrius also gives this story an allegorical sense, Dissert. xv. Αυτον μεν τον Οδυσσεα εχ' ορας, ως πανθοιαις συμφοραις αντιεχνημεν αρειη σωζει, τατο αυτω το εκ Κερκης Μωλυ, τατο το εν θαλαττη

And shew'd its nature and its wondrous pow'r:
 Black was the root, but milky-white the flow'r;
 Moly the name, to mortals hard to find, 365
 But all is easy to th' ethereal kind.
 This Hermeſ gave, then gliding off the glade
 Shot to Olympus from the woodland shade.

While full of thought, revolving fates to come,
 I speed my passage to th' enchanted dome: 370

κηδεμνον; that is, 'Dost thou not observe Ulysses, how by opposing virtue to adversity he preserves his life? This is the Moly that protects him from Circe, this is the scarf that delivers him from the storm, from Polypheme, from hell,' &c. See also Dissert. xix.

It is pretended that Moly is an Egyptian plant, and that it was really made use of as a preservative against enchantments: but I believe the Moly of Mercury, and the Nepenthe of Helen, are of the same production, and grow only in poetical ground.

Ovid has translated this passage in his *Metamorphosis*, lib. xiv.

'Pacifer huic dederat florem Cyllenius album;
 Moly vocant superi, nigrâ radice tenetur, &c.'

There is a remarkable sweetness in the verse which describes the appearance of Mercury in the shape of a young man;

— — Νενηνι ἀνδρι εἰσιωγῃς
 Ἰδῶτον υπήνητη τέ περ χαρίεσταιη ἤβη.

' — — On his bloomy face
 Youth smul'd celestial — —'

Virgil was sensible of the beauty of it, and imitated it;

'Ora puer primâ signans intonsa juventâ.'

But in the opinion of Macrobius, he falls short of Homer, lib. v. Saturn. 13. 'Prætermisâ gratiâ incipientis pubertatis τε περ χαρίεσταιη, minus gratam fecit latinam descriptionem.'

Arriv'd, before the lofty gates I stay'd;
The lofty gates the goddess wide display'd;
She leads before, and to the feast invites;
I follow sadly to the magic rites.

Radiant with starry studs, a silver seat 375

Receiv'd my limbs; a footstool eas'd my feet.

She mix'd the potion, fraudulent of soul;

The poison mantled in the golden bowl.

I took, and quaff'd it, confident in heav'n:

Then wav'd the wand, and then the word was giv'n.

Hence to thy fellows! (dreadful she began) 381

Go, be a beast!—I heard, and yet was man.

Then sudden whirling, like a waving flame,
My beamy falchion, I assault the dame.

Struck with unusual fear, she trembling cries, 385

She faints, she falls; she lifts her weeping eyes.

V. 379. *I took, and quaff'd it, confident in heav'n.*] It may be asked if Ulysses is not as culpable as his companions, in drinking this potion? Where lies the difference? and how is the allegory carried on, when Ulysses yields to the solicitation of Circe, that is Pleasure, and indulges, not resists his appetites? The moral of the fable is, that all pleasure is not unlawful, but the excess of it: we may enjoy, provided it be with moderation. Ulysses does not taste till he is fortified against it; whereas his companions yielded without any care or circumspection; they indulged their appetites only, Ulysses takes merely out of a desire to deliver his associates: he makes himself master of Circe, or Pleasure, and is not in the power of it, and enjoys it upon his own terms; they are slaves to it, and out of a capacity ever to regain their freedom but by the assistance of Ulysses. The general moral of the whole fable of Circe is, that pleasure is as dreadful an enemy and danger, and a Circe as hard to be conquered as a Polypheme.

What art thou? say! from whence, from whom
you came?

O more than human! tell thy race, thy name.
Amazing strength, these poisons to sustain!
Not mortal thou, nor mortal is thy brain. 390
Or art thou he? the man to come (foretold
By Hermes pow'rful with the wand of gold)
The man from Troy, who wander'd ocean round;
The man for wisdom's various arts renown'd,
Ulysses? oh! thy threat'ning fury cease, 395
Sheath thy bright sword, and join our hands in peace;
Let mutual joys our mutual trust combine,
And love, and love-born confidence be thine.

And how, dread Circe! (furious I rejoin)
Can love, and love-born confidence be mine! 400
Beneath thy charms when my companions groan,
Transform'd to beasts, with accents not their own.
O thou of fraudulent heart! shall I be led
To share thy feast-rites, or ascend thy bed;

V. 403. — — *Shall I be led
To share thy feast-rites.*]

Eustathius observes, that we have here the picture of a man truly wise, who when Pleasure courts him to indulge his appetites, not only knows how to abstain, but suspects it to be a bait to draw him into some inconveniences: a man should never think himself in security in the house of a Circe. It may be added, that these apprehensions of Ulysses are not without a foundation; from this intercourse with that goddess, Ttlegonus sprung, who accidentally slew his father Ulysses.

That, all unarm'd, thy vengeance may have vent, 405
And magic bind me, cold and impotent?

Celestial as thou art, yet stand deny'd;

Or swear that oath by which the gods are ty'd,

Swear, in thy soul no latent frauds remain,

Swear, by the vow which never can be vain. 410

The goddess swore: then seiz'd my hand, and led
To the sweet transports of the genial bed.

Ministrant to their queen, with busy care

Four faithful handmaids the soft rites prepare;

Nymphs sprung from fountains, or from shady woods,

Or the fair offspring of the sacred floods. 416

One o'er the couches painted carpets threw,

Whose purple lustre glow'd against the view:

White linen lay beneath. Another plac'd

The silver stands with golden flaskets grac'd: 420

V. 414. *Four faithful handmaids, &c.*] This large description of the entertainment in the palace of Circe, is particularly judicious; Ulysses is in an house of pleasure, and the poet dwells upon it, and shews how every circumstance contributes to promote and advance it. The attendants are all nymphs, and the bath and perfumes usher in the feast and wines. The four verses that follow, are omitted by Dacier, and they are marked in Eustathius as superfluous; they are to be found in other parts of the Odyssey; but that, I confess, would be no argument why they should not stand here (such repetitions being frequent in Homer), if they had a due propriety, but they contain a tautology. We see before a table spread for the entertainment of Ulysses, why then should that circumstance be repeated? If they are omitted, there will no chasm or incoherence appear, and therefore probably they were not originally inserted here by Homer.

With dulcet bev'rage this the beaker crown'd,
 Fair in the midst, with gilded cups around:
 That in the tripod o'er the kindled pile
 The water pours; the bubbling waters boil:
 An ample vase receives the smoking wave; 425
 And, in the bath prepar'd, my limbs I lave:
 Reviving sweets repair the mind's decay,
 And take the painful sense of toil away.
 A vest and tunic o'er me next she threw,
 Fresh from the bath and dropping balmy dew; 430
 Then led and plac'd me on the sov'reign seat,
 With carpets spread; a footstool at my feet.
 The golden ew'r a nymph obsequious brings,
 Replenish'd from the cool translucent springs;
 With copious water the bright vase supplies 435
 A silver laver of capacious size.
 I wash'd. The table in fair order spread,
 They heap the glitt'ring canisters with bread;
 Viands of various kinds allure the taste,
 Of choicest sort and savour, rich repast! 440
 Circe in vain invites the feast to share;
 Absent I ponder, and absorpt in care:
 While scenes of woe rose anxious in my breast
 The queen beheld me, and these words addrest.

Can yet a doubt, or any dread remain,
When sworn that oath which never can be vain? 450

I answer'd, Goddess! humane is thy breast,
By justice sway'd, by tender pity prest:
Ill fits it me, whose friends are sunk to beasts,
To quaff thy bowls, or riot in thy feasts.
Me wouldst thou please? for them thy cares employ,
And them to me restore, and me to joy. 456

With that, she parted: in her potent hand
She bore the virtue of the magic wand.
Then hast'ning to the sties set wide the door,
Urg'd forth, and drove the bristly herd before; 460
Unwieldy, out they rush'd, with gen'ral cry,
Enormous beasts dishonest to the eye.
Now touch'd by counter-charms, they change agen,
And stand majestic, and recall'd to men.
Those hairs of late that bristled ev'ry part, 465
Fall off; miraculous effect of art!
Till all the form in full proportion rise,
More young, more large, more graceful to my eyes.
They saw, they knew me, and with eager pace
Clung to their master in a long embrace. 470

V. 468. *More young, — more graceful to my eyes.*] Homer excellently carries on his allegory: he intends by this expression of the enlargement of the beauty of Ulysses's companions, to teach that men who turn from an evil course, into the path of virtue, excel even themselves; having learned the value of virtue from the miseries they suffered in pursuit of vice, they become new men, and as it were enjoy a second life. EUSTATHIUS.

Sad, pleasing sight! with tears each eye ran o'er,
And sobs of joy re-echo'd through the bow'r:
Ev'n Circe wept, her adamant heart
Felt pity enter, and sustain'd her part.

Son of Laertes! (then the queen began) 475
Oh much-enduring, much-experienc'd man!
Haste to thy vessel on the sea-beat shore,
Unload thy treasures, and the galley moor;
Then bring' thy friends, secure from future harms,
And in our grottos stow thy spoils and arms. 480

She said. Obedient to her high command
I quit the place, and hasten to the strand.
My sad companions on the beach I found,
Their wistful eyes in floods of sorrow drown'd.
As from fresh pastures and the dewy field 485
(When loaded cribs their ev'ning banquet yield)

V. 485. *As from fresh pastures and the dewy field, &c.*] If this simile were to be rendered literally, it would run thus; 'as calves seeing the droves of cows returning at night when they are filled with their pasturage, run skipping out to meet them; the stalls no longer detain them, but running round their dams they fill the plain with their lowings, &c.' If a similitude of this nature were to be introduced into modern poetry, I am of opinion it would fall under ridicule for want of delicacy: but in reality, images drawn from nature, and a rural life, have always a very good effect; in particular, this before us enlivens a melancholy description of sorrows, and so exactly expresses in every point the joy of Ulysses's companions, we see them in the very description. To judge rightly of comparisons, we are not to examine if the subject from whence they are derived be great or little, noble or familiar, but we are principally to consider if the image produced be clear and lively, if the poet have skill to dig-

The lowing herds return; around them throng
With leaps and bounds their late-imprison'd young,
Rush to their mothers with unruly joy,
And echoing hills return the tender cry: 490
So round me press'd exulting at my sight,
With cries and agonics of wild delight,
The weeping sailors; nor less fierce their joy
Than if return'd to Ithaea from Troy.
Ah master! ever honour'd, ever dear, 495
(These tender words on ev'ry side I hear)
What other joy can equal thy return?
Not that lov'd country for whose sight we mourn,
The soil that nurs'd us, and that gave us breath:
But ah! relate our lost companions death. 500
I answer'd cheerful. Haste, your galley moor,
And bring our treasures and our arms ashore:
Those in yon hollow caverns let us lay;
Then rise and follow where I lead the way.

nify it by poetical words, and if it perfectly paints the thing it is intended to represent. This rule fully vindicates Homer: though he frequently paints low life, yet he never uses terms which are not noble; or if he uses humble words or phrases, it is with so much art, that, as Dionysius observes, they become noble and harmonious. In short, a top may be used with propriety and elegance in a similitude by a Virgil, and the sun may be dishonoured by a Mævi^{us}; a mean thought expressed in noble terms being more tolerable, than a noble thought disgraced by mean expressions. Things that have an intrinsic greatness need only to be barely represented to fill the soul with admiration, but it shews the skill of a poet to raise a low subject, and exalt common appearances into dignity.

Your fellows live: believe your eyes, and come 505
To take the joys of Cīrce's sacred dome.

With ready speed the joyful crew obey:
Alone Eurylochus persuades their stay.
Whither (he cry'd) ah whither will ye run?
Seek ye to meet those evils ye should shun? 510
Will you the terrors of the dome explore,
In swine to grovel, or in lions roar,
Or wolf-like howl away the midnight hour
In dreadful watch around the magic bow'r?
Remember Cyclops, and his bloody deed; 515
The leader's rashness made the soldiers bleed.

I heard incens'd, and first resolv'd to speed
My flying falchion at the rebel's head.
Dear as he was, by ties of kindred bound,
This hand had stretch'd him breathless on the ground;
But all at once my interposing train 521
For mercy pleaded, nor could plead in vain.
Leave here the man who dares his prince desert,
Leave to repentance and his own sad heart,

V. 515. *Remember Cyclops, &c.*] The poet paints Eurylochus uniformly, under great disorder of mind and terrible apprehensions: there is no similitude between Circe and Cyclops, with respect to the usage of the companions of Ulysses; but Homer puts these expressions into his mouth, to represent the nature of terror, which confounds the thoughts, and consequently distracts the language of a person who is possessed by it. The character therefore of Eurylochus is the imitation of a person confounded with fears, speaking irrationally and incoherently. EUSTATHIUS.

To guard the ship. Seek we the sacred shades 525
Of Circe's palace, where Ulysses leads.

This with one voice declar'd, the rising train
Left the black vessel by the murmur'ing main.
Shame touch'd Eurylochus's alter'd breast,
He fear'd my threats, and follow'd with the rest. 530

Meanwhile the goddess, with indulgent cares
And social joys, the late transform'd repairs;
The bath, the feast, their fainting soul renews;
Rich in refulgent robes, and dropping balmy dews:
Bright'ning with joy their eager eyes behold 535
Each other's face, and each his story told;

Then gushing tears the narrative confound,
And with their sobs the vaulted roofs resound.
When hush'd their passion, thus the goddess cries;
Ulysses, taught by labours to be wise, 540
Let this short memory of grief suffice.

To me are known the various woes ye bore,
In storms by sea, in perils on the shore;
Forget whatever was in fortune's pow'r,
And share the pleasures of this genial hour. 545

Such be your minds as ere ye left your coast,
Or learn'd to sorrow for a country lost.
Exiles and wand'ers now, where'er ye go,
Too faithful memory renews your woe;
The cause remov'd, habitual griefs remain, 550
And the soul saddens by the use of pain.

Her kind intreaty mov'd the gen'ral breast;
Tir'd with long toil, we willing sunk to rest.
We ply'd the banquet and the bowl we crown'd,
Till the full circle of the year came round. 555
But when the seasons, following in their train,
Brought back the months, the days, and hours again;
As from a lethargy at once they rise,
And urge their chief with animating cries.

Is this, Ulysses, our inglorious lot? 560
And is the name of Ithaca forgot?
Shall never the dear land in prospect rise,
Or the lov'd palace glitter in our eyes?

Melting I heard; yet till the sun's decline
Prolong'd the feast, and quaff'd the rosy wine: 565
But when the shades came on at ev'ning hour,
And all lay slumb'ring in the dusky bow'r;
I came a suppliant to fair Circe's bed,
The tender moment seiz'd, and thus I said.

Be mindful, goddess, of thy promise made; 570
Must sad Ulysses ever be delay'd?
Around their lord my sad companions mourn,
Each breast beats homeward, anxious to return:
If but a moment parted from thy eyes, 574
Their tears flow round me, and my heart complies.

Go then (she cry'd), ah go! yet think, not I,
Not Circe, but the Fates your wish deny.
Ah hope not yet to breathe thy native air!
Far other journey first demands thy care;

To whom Persephone, entire and whole,

Gave to retain th' unseparated soul:

585

and be acquainted with what is contained in the bowels of the earth, and bring to light the secrets of nature: that he ought to know the nature of the soul, what it suffers, and how it acts after it is separated from the body. EUSTATHIUS.

V. 584. *To whom Persephone, &c.*] Homer here gives the reason why Tiresias should be consulted, rather than any other ghost, because

Τὸ τε φρένες ἐμπεδοὶ εἰσι.

This expression is fully explained, and the notion of the soul after death, which prevailed among the ancients, is set in a clear light, verse 92, and 124, of the xxiid book of the Iliad, to which passages I refer the readers. But whence had Tiresias this privilege above the rest of the dead? Callimachus ascribes it to Pluto.

Καὶ μὲν εὐτὲ ἑλθὼν, πεπνυμένῳ ἐν νεκυεσσὶ
Φοῖβας, μεγαλῶ τιμῇ Ἀγασίλα.

Tully mentions this pre-eminence of Tiresias in his first book of Divination. Perhaps the whole fiction may arise from his great reputation among the ancients for prophecy; and in honour to his memory they might imagine that his soul after death retained the same superiority. Ovid in his Metamorphoses gives us a very jocular reason for the blindness and prophetic knowledge of Tiresias, from a matrimonial contest between Jupiter and Juno. Cato Major, as Plutarch in his Political Precepts informs us, applied this verse to Scipio, when he was made consul contrary to the Roman statutes.

Οἷος πεπνυλῆαι, τοὶ δὲ σκῆαι αἰσθεσιν,

But I ought not to suppress what Diodorus Siculus relates concerning Tiresias. Biblioth. lib. iv. he tells us, that he had a daughter named Daphne, a priestess at Delphi. Παρ' ἧς ῥασι καὶ τὸν ποιητὴν Ὁμήρον πολλὰ τῶν ἐπῶν σφείρισσάμενον, κοσμήσαι τὴν ἰδίαν ποιήσιν. That is, 'From whom it is said, that the poet Homer received many (of the Sibyl's) verses, and adorned his own poetry with them.' If this be true, there lay a debt of gratitude upon Homer, and he pays it honourably,

The rest are forms, of empty æther made;
Impassive semblance, and a flitting shade.

Struck at the word, my very heart was dead;
Pensive I sat; my tears bedew'd the bed;
To hate the light and life my soul begun, 590
And saw that all was grief beneath the sun!
Compos'd at length, the gushing tears suppress,
And my toss'd limbs now weary'd into rest,
How shall I tread (I cry'd), ah Circe! say,
The dark descent, and who shall guide the way? 595
Can living eyes behold the realms below?
What bark to waft me, and what wind to blow?

Thy fated road (the magic pow'r reply'd)
Divine Ulysses! asks no mortal guide.
Rear but the mast, the spacious sail display, 600
The northern winds shall wing thee on thy way.
Soon shalt thou reach old Ocean's utmost ends,
Where to the main the shelving shore descends;

by this distinguishing character, which he gives to the father. An instance of a worthy disposition in the poet, and it remains at once an honour to Tiresias, and a monument of his own gratitude.

This descent of Ulysses into hell has a very happy effect, it gives Homer an opportunity to embellish his poetry with an admirable variety, and to insert fables and histories that at once instruct and delight. It is particularly happy with respect to the Phæacians, who could not but highly admire a person whose wisdom had not only delivered him from so many perils on earth, but had been permitted by the gods to see the regions of the dead, and return among the living; this relation could not fail of pleasing an audience delighted with strange stories, and extraordinary adventures.

The barren trees of Proserpine's black woods,
 Poplars and willows trembling o'er the floods: 605
 There fix thy vessel in the lonely bay,
 And enter there the kingdoms void of day:

V. 602. *Soon shalt thou reach old Ocean's utmost ends, &c.*] This whole scene is excellently imagined by the poet, as Eustathius observes; the trees are all barren, the place is upon the shores where nothing grows; and all the rivers are of a melancholy signification, suitable to the ideas we have of those infernal regions. Ulysses arrives at this place, where he calls up the shades of the dead, in the space of one day; from whence we may conjecture, that he means a place that lies between Cumæ and Baiæ, near the lake Avernus, in Italy; which, as Strabo remarks, is the scene of the necromancy of Homer, according to the opinion of antiquity. He further adds, that there really are such rivers as Homer mentions, though not placed in their true situation, according to the liberty allowable to poetry. Others write, that the Cimmerii once inhabited Italy, and that the famous cave of Pausilipe was begun by them about the time of the Trojan wars: here they offered sacrifice to the Manes, which might give occasion to Homer's fiction. The Grecians, who inhabited these places after the Cimmerians, converted these dark habitations into stoves, baths, &c.

Silius Italicus writes, that the Lucrine lake was anciently called Cocytus, lib. xii.

'Ast hic Lucrino mansisse vocabula quondam
 Cocyti memorat.' — —

It is also probable, that Acheron was the ancient name of Avernus, because Acherusia, a large water near Cumæ, flows into it by concealed passages. Silius Italicus informs us, that Avernus was also called Styx.

'Ille olim populis dictum Styga, nomine verso,
 Stagna inter celebrem nunc mita monstrat Avernum.'

Here Hannibal offered sacrifice to the Manes, as it is recorded by

Where Phlegeton's loud torrents rushing down,
Hiss in the flaming gulf of Acheron;

Livy; and Tully affirms it from an ancient poet, from whom he quotes the following fragment;

' Inde in viciniâ nostrâ Averni lacus,
Unde animæ excitantur obscurâ umbra,
A'ti Acherontis aperto ostio.'

This may seem to justify the observation that Acheron was once the name of Avernus, though the words are capable of a different interpretation.

If these remarks be true, it is probable that Homer does not neglect geography, as most commentators judge. Virgil describes Æneas descending into hell by Avernus, after the example of Homer. Milton places these rivers in hell, and beautifully describes their natures, in his *Paradise Lost*.

' — — — — Along the banks
Of four infernal rivers, that disgorge
Into the burning lake their baleful streams,
Abhorred Styx, the flood of deadly hate;
Sad Acheron, of sorrow, black and deep:
Cocytus, nam'd of lamentation loud
Heard on the rueful stream: fierce Phlegeton,
Whose wayes of torrent-fire inflame with rage;
Far off from these a slow and silent stream,
Lethe, the river of oblivion, rolls
Her wat'ry labyrinth, whereof who drinks
Forthwith his former state and being forgets,
Forgets both joy and grief, pleasure and pain.'

Thus also, agreeably to the idea of hell, the offerings to the infernal powers are all black, the Cimmerians lie in a land of darkness; the heifer which Ulysses is to offer is barren, like that in Virgil.

' — — Sterilemque tibi, Proserpina, Vaccam;'

to denote that the grave is unfruitful, that it devours all things, that it is a place where all things are forgotten.

And where, slow-rolling from the Stygian bed, 610
 'Cocytus' lamentable waters spread:
 Where the dark rock o'erhangs th' infernal lake,
 And mingling streams eternal murmurs make.
 First draw thy falchion, and on ev'ry side
 Trench the black earth a cubit long and wide: 615
 To all the shades around libations pour,
 And o'er th' ingredient strow the hallow'd flour:
 New wine and milk, with honey temper'd, bring,
 And living water from the crystal spring.
 Then the wan shades and feeble ghosts implore, 620
 With promis'd off'rings on thy native shore;
 A barren cow, the stateliest of the isle,
 And, heap'd with various wealth, a blazing pile:
 These to the rest; but to the Seer must bleed
 A sable ram, the pride of all thy breed, 625
 These solemn vows and holy offerings paid
 To all the phantom-nations of the dead;
 Be next thy care the sable sheep to place
 Full o'er the pit, and hell-ward turn their face:
 But from th' infernal rite thine eye withdraw, 630
 And back to Ocean glance with rev'rend awe.
 Sudden shall skim along the dusky glades
 Thin airy shoals, and visionary shades.
 Then give command the sacrifice to haste,
 Let the flay'd victims in the flame be cast, 635
 And sacred vows, and mystic song, apply'd
 To grisly Pluto, and his gloomy bride;

Wide o'er the pool, thy falchion wav'd around
Shall drive the spectres from forbidden ground:
The sacred draught shall all the dead forbear, 640
Till awful from the shades arise the Seer.
Let him, oraculous, the end, the way,
The turns of all thy future fate, display,
Thy pilgrimage to come, and remnant of thy day.

So speaking, from the ruddy orient shone 645
The morn conspicuous on her golden throne.
The goddess with a radiant tunic drest
My limbs, and o'er me cast a silken vest.
Long flowing robes, of purest white, array
The nymph, that added lustre to the day: 650
A tiar wreath'd her head with many a fold;
Her waste was circled with a zone of gold.
Forth issuing then, from place to place I flew;
Rouse man by man, and animate my crew.
Rise, rise my mates! 'tis Circe gives command: 655
Our journey calls us; haste, and quit the land.
All rise and follow, yet depart not all,
For fate decreed one wretched man to fall.

A youth there was, Elpenor was he nam'd,
Not much for sense, nor much for courage fam'd;

V. 659. *A youth there was, Elpenor was he nam'd.*] Homer dismisses not the description of this house of pleasure and debauch, without shewing the moral of his fable, which is the ill consequences that attend those who indulge themselves in sensuality; this is set forth in the punishment of Elpenor. He describes him as a person of no worth, to shew that debauchery enervates our faculties, and renders

The youngest of our band, a vulgar soul 661

Born but to banquet, and to drain the bowl.

He, hot and careless, on a turret's height

With sleep repair'd the long debauch of night:

The sudden tumult stirr'd him where he lay, 665

And down he hasten'd, but forgot the way;

Full endlong from the roof the sleeper fell,

And snapp'd the spinal joint, and wak'd in hell.

The rest crowd round me with an eager look;

I met them with a sigh, and thus bespoke. 670

Already, friends! ye think your toils are o'er,

Your hopes already touch your native shore:

Alas! far otherwise the nymph declares,

Far other journey first demands our cares;

both the mind and body incapable of thinking, or acting with greatness and bravery. At the same time these circumstantial relations are not without a good effect; for they render the story probable, as if it were spoken with the veracity of an history, not the liberty of poetry.

I will conclude this book with a paragraph from Plutarch's *Morals*: it is a piece of advice to the fair sex, drawn from the story of Circe and Ulysses. 'They who bait their hooks (says this philosopher) with intoxicated drugs may catch fish with little trouble; but then they prove dangerous to eat, and unpleasant to the taste: thus women who use arts to ensnare their admirers, become wives of fools and madmen: they whom the sorceress Circe enchanted, were no better than brutes; and she used them accordingly, enclosing them with sties; but she loved Ulysses intirely, whose prudence avoided her intoxications, and made his conversation agreeable. Those women who will not believe that Pasiphae was ever enamoured of a bull, are yet themselves so extravagant, as to abandon the society of men of sense and temperance, and to betake themselves to the embraces of brutal and stupid fellows.' PLUT. *Conjugal Precepts*.

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To tread th' uncomfortable paths beneath, 675

The dreary realms of darkness and of death:

To seek Tiresias' awful shade below,

And thence our fortunes and our fates to know.

My sad companions heard in deep despair;

Frantic they tore their manly growth of hair; 680

To earth they fell; the tears began to rain;

But tears in mortal miseries are vain.

Sadly they far'd along the sea-beat shore;

Still heav'd their hearts, and still their eyes ran o'er.

The ready victims at our bark we found, 685

The sable ewe, and ram, together bound.

For swift as thought, the goddess had been there,

And thence had glided, viewless as the air:

The paths of gods what mortal can survey?

Who eyes their motion? who shall trace their way?

THE
ELEVENTH BOOK
OF THE
ODYSSEY.

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THE
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THE ARGUMENT.

THE DESCENT INTO HELL.

ULYSSES continues his narration, How he arrived at the land of the Cimmerians, and what ceremonies he performed to invoke the dead. The manner of his descent, and the apparition of the shades: his conversation with Elpenor, and with Tiresias, who informs him in a prophetic manner of his fortunes to come. He meets his mother Anticlea, from whom he learns the state of his family. He sees the shades of the ancient heroines, afterwards of the heroes, and converses in particular with Agamemnon and Achilles. Ajax keeps at a sullen distance, and disdains to answer him. He then beholds Tityus, Tantalus, Sysiphus, Hercules: till he is deterred from further curiosity by the apparition of horrid spectres, and the cries of the wicked in torments.

THE
ODYSSEY.

BOOK XI.

Now to the shores we bend, a mournful train,
Climb the tall bark, and launch into the main :
At once the mast we rear, at once unbind
The spacious sheet, and stretch it to the wind :

* The ancients called this book *Nekyomanteia*, or *Nekya*, the book of Necromancy: because (says Eustathius) it contains an interview between Ulysses and the shades of the dead.

Virgil has not only borrowed the general design from Homer, but imitated many particular incidents: L' Abbé Fraguier in the *Memoirs of Literature* gives his judgment in favour of the Roman poet, and justly observes, that the end and design of the journey is more important in Virgil than in Homer. Ulysses descends to consult Tiresias, Æneas his father. Ulysses takes a review of the shades of celebrated persons that preceded his times, or whom he knew at Troy, who have no relation to the story of the Odyssey: Æneas receives the history of his own posterity; his father instructs him how to manage the Italian war, and how to conclude it with honour; that is, to lay the foundations of the greatest empire in the world; and the poet by a very happy address takes an opportunity to pay a noble compliment to his patron Augustus. In the Æneid there is a magnificent description of the descent and entrance into hell; and the diseases, cares, and terrors that Æneas sees in his journey, are very happily ima-

Then pale and pensive stand, with cares oppress, 5
And solemn horror saddens ev'ry breast.

gined, as an introduction into the regions of death: whereas in Homer there is nothing so noble, we scarce are able to discover the place where the poet lays his scene, or whether Ulysses continues below or above the ground. Instead of a descent into hell, it seems rather a conjuring up, or an evocation of the dead from hell, according to the words of Horace, who undoubtedly had this passage of Homer in his thoughts. *Satire viii. lib. 1.*

‘ — — Scalpere terram
Unguibus, et pullam divellere mordicus agnam
Cœperunt; cruor in fossam confusus, ut inde
Manes elicerent, animas responsa daturas.’

But if it be understood of an evocation only, how shall we account for several visions and descriptions in the conclusion of this book? Ulysses sees Tantalus in the waters of hell, and Sisyphus rolling a stone up an infernal mountain; these Ulysses could not conjure up and consequently must be supposed to have entered at least the borders of those infernal regions. In short, Fraguier is of opinion, that Virgil profited more by the *Frogs* of Aristophanes than by Homer: and Mr. Dryden prefers the sixth book of the *Æneid* to the eleventh of the *Odyssey*, I think with very great reason.

I will take this opportunity briefly to mention the original of all these fictions of infernal rivers, judges, &c. spoken of by Homer, and repeated and enlarged by Virgil. They are of Egyptian extract, as Mr. Sandys (that faithful traveller, and judicious poet) observes, speaking of the mummies of Memphis, p. 134.

‘ These ceremonies performed, they laid the corpse in a boat to be wafted over Acherusia, a lake on the south of Memphis, by one only person, whom they called Charon; which gave Orpheus the invention of his infernal ferryman; an ill-favoured slovenly fellow, as Virgil describes him, *Æneid* vi. About this lake stood the shady temple of Hecate, with the ports of Cocytus and Oblivion, separated by bars of brass, the original of like fables. When landed on the other side,

A fresh'ning breeze the * magic pow'r supply'd,
While the wing'd vessel flew along the tide;

the bodies were brought before certain judges: if convicted of an evil life, they were deprived of burial; if otherwise, they were suffered to be interred.' This explication shews the foundation of those ancient fables of Charon, Rhadamanthus, &c. and also that the poets had a regard to truth in their inventions, and grounded even their fables upon some remarkable customs, which grew obscure and absurd only because the memory of the customs to which they allude is lost to posterity.

I will only add from Dacier, that this book is an evidence of the antiquity of the opinion of the soul's immortality. It is upon this that the most ancient of all divinations was founded, I mean that which was performed by the evocation of the dead. There is a very remarkable instance of this in the holy Scriptures, in an age not very distant from that of Homer. Saul consults one of these infernal agents to call up Samuel, who appears, or some evil spirit in his form, and predicts his impending death and calamities. This is a pregnant instance of the antiquity of necromancy, and that it was not of Homer's invention; it prevailed long before his days among the Chaldeans, and spread over all the oriental world. Æschylus has a tragedy intitled *Persæ*, in which the shade of Darius is called up, like that of Samuel, and foretels queen Atossa all her misfortunes. Thus it appears that there was a foundation for what Homer writes; he only embellishes the opinions of antiquity with the ornaments of poetry.

I must confess that Homer gives a miserable account of a future state; there is not a person described in happiness, unless perhaps it be Tiresias: the good and the bad seem all in the same condition: whereas Virgil has an Hell for the wicked, and an Elysium for the just. Though perhaps it may be a vindication of Homer to say, that the notions of Virgil of a future state were different from those of Homer; according to whom hell might only be a receptacle for the vehicles of the dead, and that while they were in hell, their *φῆνη* or

* Circe.

Our oars we shipp'd: all day the swelling sails
Full from the guiding pilot catch'd the gales. 10

Now sunk the sun from his aerial height,
And o'er the shaded billows rush'd the night:
When lo! we reach'd old Ocean's utmost bounds,
Where rocks control his waves with ever-during mounds.

There in a lonely land, and gloomy cells, 15
The dusky nation of Cimmeria dwells;

spirit might be in heaven, as appears from what is said of the *ειδωλον* of Hercules in this xith book of the *Odyssey*.

V. 15. *There in a lonely land, and gloomy cells,
The dusky nation of Cimmeria dwells.]*

It is the opinion of many commentators, that Homer constantly in these voyages of Ulysses makes use of a fabulous geography; but perhaps the contrary opinion in many places may be true: in this passage, Ulysses in the space of one day sails from the island of Circe to the Cimmerians: now it is very evident from Herodotus and Strabo, that they inhabited the regions near the Bosphorus, and consequently Ulysses could not sail thither in the compass of a day, and therefore, says Strabo, the poet removes not only the Cimmerians, but their climate and darkness, from the northern Bosphorus into Campania in Italy.

But that there really were a people in Italy named Cimmerians is evident from the testimony of many authors. So Lycophrou plainly understands this passage, and relates these adventures as performed in Italy. He recapitulates all the voyages of Ulysses, and mentioning the descent into hell, and the Cimmerians, he immediately describes the infernal rivers, and adds (speaking of the Apennine),

Εξ ου τα παντα χυτλα, και πασαι μυχων
Πηλαι, κατ' Αυσονιτιν ελκονται χθονα.

That is, 'From whence all the rivers, and all the fountains flow through the regions of Italy.' And these lines of Tibullus,

The sun ne'er views th' uncomfortable seats,
When radiant he advances, or retreats:
Unhappy race! whom endless night invades,
Clouds the dull air, and wraps them round in shades.

The ship we moor on these obscure abodes; 21
Disbark the sheep, an off'ring to the gods;
And hell-ward bending, o'er the beach descry
The dolesome passage to th' infernal sky.
The victims, vow'd to each Tartarean pow'r, 25
Eurylochus and Perimedes bore.

Here open'd hell, all hell I here implor'd,
And from the scabbard drew the shining sword;
And trenching the black earth on ev'ry side,
A cavern form'd, a cubit long and wide. 30

' Cimmerion etiam obscuras accessit ad arces,
Queis nunquam candente dies apparuit ortu,
Sive supra terras Phœbus, seu curreret infra.'

are understood by all interpreters to denote the Italian Cimmerians: who dwelt near Baïæ and the lake Avernus, and therefore Homer may be imagined not entirely to follow a fabulous geography. It is evident from Herodotus that these Cimmerians were anciently a powerful nation; for passing into Asia (says that author in his Clio) they possessed themselves of Sardis, in the time of Ardyes, the son of Gyges. If so, it is possible they might make several settlements in different parts of the world, and call those settlements by their original name, Cimmerians, and consequently there might be Italian, as well as Scythian Cimmerians.

It must be allowed, that this horrid region is well chosen for the descent into hell: it is described as a land of obscurity and horrors, and happily imagined to introduce a relation concerning the realms of death and darkness.

New wine, with honey-temper'd milk, we bring,
 Then living waters from the crystal spring;
 O'er these was strew'd the consecrated flour,
 And on the surface shone the holy store.

Now the wan shades we hail, th' infernal gods, 35
 To speed our course, and waft us o'er the floods:
 So shall a barren heifer from the stall
 Beneath the knife upon your altars fall;

V. 31. *New wine, with honey-temper'd milk.*] The word in the original is, *μελιμπαλον*, which (as Eustathius observes) the ancients constantly understood to imply a mixture of honey and milk; but all writers who succeeded Homer as constantly used it to signify a composition of water mixed with honey. The Latin poets have borrowed their magical rites from Homer: thus Ovid. *Metam.* vii. 248.

' *Haud procul, egestâ scrobibus tellure duabus,
 Sacra facit: cultrosque in guttur velleris atri
 Conjicit; et patulas perfundit sanguine fossas.
 Tum super invergens tepidi carchesia lactis
 Alteraque infundens liquidi carchesia mellis,* &c.

Thus also Statius:

' — — Tellure cavatâ
 Inclinat Bacchi latices, et munera verni
 Lactis, et Aëæos imbres,' &c.

This libation is made to all the departed shades; but to what purpose (objects Eustathius) should these rites be paid to the dead, when it is evident from the subsequent relation that they were ignorant of these ceremonies till they had tasted the libation? He answers from the ancients, that they were merely honorary to the regents of the dead, Pluto and Proserpina; and used to obtain their leave to have an interview with the shades in their dominions.

So in our palace, at our safe return
 Rich with unnumber'd gifts the pile shall burn; 40
 So shall a ram the largest of the breed,
 Black as these regions, to Tiresias bleed.
 Thus solemn rites and holy vows we paid
 To all the phantom-nations of the dead.
 Then dy'd the sheep; a purple torrent flow'd, 45
 And all the caverns smok'd with streaming blood.
 When lo! appear'd along the dusky coasts,
 Thin, airy shoals of visionary ghosts;

V. 47. *When lo! appear'd along the dusky coasts,
 Thin, airy shoals of visionary ghosts.]*

We are informed by Eustathius, that the ancients rejected these six verses, for, say they, these are not the shades of persons newly slain, but who have long been in these infernal regions: how then can their wounds be supposed still to be visible, especially through their armour, when the soul was separated from the body? Neither is this the proper place for their appearance, for the poet immediately subjoins, that the ghost of Elpenor was the first that he encountered in these regions of darkness. But these objections will be easily answered by having recourse to the notions which the ancients entertained concerning the dead: we must remember that they imagined that the soul though freed from the body had still a vehicle, exactly resembling the body; as the figure in a mould retains the resemblance of the mould, when separated from it; the body is but as a case to this vehicle, and it is in this vehicle that the wounds are said to be visible; this was supposed to be less gross than the mortal body, and less subtil than the soul; so that whatever wounds the outward body received when living, were believed to affect this inward substance, and consequently might be visible after separation.

It is true that the poet calls the ghost of Elpenor the first ghost, but this means the first whom he knew: Elpenor was not yet buried,

Fair, pensive youths, and soft enamour'd maids;
And wither'd elders, pale and wrinkled shades; 50.

and therefore was not yet received into the habitation of the dead, but wanders before the entrance of it. This is the reason why his shade is said to present itself the foremost: it comes not up from the realm of death, but descends towards it from the upper world.

But these shades of the warriors are said still to wear their armour in which they were slain, for the poet adds that it was stained with blood: how is it possible for these ghosts, which are only a subtle substance, not a gross body, to wear the armour they wore in the other world? How was it conveyed to them in these infernal regions? All that occurs to me in answer to this objection is, that the poet describes them suitably to the characters they bore in life; the warriors on earth are warriors in hell; and that he adds these circumstances only to denote the manner of their death, which was in battle, or by the sword. No doubt but Homer represents a future state according to the notions which his age entertained of it, and this sufficiently justifies him as a poet, who is not obliged to write truths, but according to fame and common opinions.

But to prove these verses genuine, we have the authority of Virgil: he was too sensible of their beauty not to adorn his poems with them. *Georg. iv. 470.*

‘ At cantu commotæ Erebi de sedibus imis
Umbrae ibant tenues, simulacraque luce carentum,
Matres, atque viri, defunctaque corpora vitæ
Magnanimûm heroum, pueri, innuptæque puellæ,
Impositique rogis juvenes,’ &c.

It must be confessed that the Roman poet omits the circumstance of the armour in his translation, as being perhaps contrary to the opinions prevailing in his age; but in the sixth book he describes his heroes with arms, horses, and infernal chariots; and in the story of Deiphobus we see his shade retain the wounds in hell, which he received at the time of his death in Troy,

‘ — — Lacerum crudelitur ora
Deiphobum vidi,’ &c.

Ghastly with wounds the forms of warriors slain
 • Stalk'd with majestic port, a martial train :
 These and a thousand more swarm'd o'er the ground,
 And all the dire assembly shriek'd around.
 Astonish'd at the sight, aghast I stood, 55
 And a cold fear ran shiv'ring through my blood;
 Straight I command the sacrifice to haste,
 Straight the flay'd victims to the flames are cast,
 And mutter'd vows, and mystic song apply'd
 To grisly Pluto, and his gloomy bride. 60

Now swift I wav'd my falchion o'er the blood;
 Back started the pale throngs, and trembling stood.
 Round the black trench the gore untasted flows,
 Till awful from the shades Tiresias rose.

There, wand'ring through the gloom, I first survey'd,
 New to the realms of death, Elpenor's shade: 66
 His cold remains all naked to the sky
 On distant shores unwept, unburied lie.
 Sad at the sight I stand, deep fix'd in woe,
 And ere I spoke the tears began to flow. 70

O say what angry pow'r Elpenor led
 To glide in shades, and wander with the dead?
 How could thy soul, by realms and seas disjoin'd,
 Outfly the nimble sail, and leave the lagging wind?

V. 73. *How could thy soul, by realms and seas disjoin'd,
 Outfly the nimble sail?*

Eustathius is of opinion, that Ulysses speaks pleasantly to Elpenor, for were his words to be literally translated they would be, ' Elpenor,

The ghost reply'd: To hell my doom I owe, 75
Demons accurst, dire ministers of woe!

thou art come hither on foot, sooner than I in a ship.' I suppose it is the worthless character of Elpenor that led that critic into this opinion; but I should rather take the sentence to be spoken seriously, not only because such raileries are an insult upon the unfortunate, and levities perhaps unworthy of epic poetry, but also from the general conduct of Ulysses, who at the sight of Elpenor burst into tears, and compassionates the fate of his friend. Is there any thing in this that looks like millery? if there be, we must confess that Ulysses makes a very quick transition from sorrow to pleasantry. The other is a more noble sense, and therefore I have followed it, and it excellently paints the surprise of Ulysses at the unexpected sight of Elpenor, and expresses his wonder that the soul, the moment it leaves the body, should reach the receptacle of departed shades.

But it may be asked, what connexion this story of Elpenor has to the subject of the poem, and what it contributes to the end of it? Bossu very well answers, that the poet may insert some incidents that make no part of the fable or action; especially if they be short, and break not the thread of it: this before us is only a small part of a large episode, which the poet was at liberty to insert or omit, as contributed most to the beauty of his poetry; besides, it contains an excellent moral, and shews us the ill effects of drunkenness and debauchery. The poet represents Elpenor as a person of a mean character, and punishes his crime with sudden death, and dishonour.

I will only add that Virgil treads in the footsteps of Homer, and Misenus in the Æneid is the Elpenor of the Odyssey: there is indeed some difference; Misenus suffers for his presumption, Elpenor for his debauchery.

V. 75. — — *To hell my doom I owe,
Demons accurs'd, dire ministers of woe.]*

The words in the original are, Ἄρα με Δαίμονες αἰσα. The identity of sound in *ara* and *aïsa* may perhaps appear a little inharmonious, and shock the ear. It is a known observation, that the nice ears in

My feet through wine unfaithful to their weight,
 Betray'd me tumbling from a tow'ry height:
 Staggr'ing I reel'd, and as I reel'd I fell,
 Lux'd the neck-joint—my soul descends to hell. 80
 But lend me aid, I now conjure thee lend,
 By the soft tie and sacred name of friend!

the court of Augustus could not pardon Virgil for a like similitude of cadence in this verse,

' At regina Pyra — —'

But these are rather negligencies than errors; they are indeed to be avoided, but a great genius sometimes overlooks such niceties, and sacrifices sound to sense.

The words of Quintilian are very apposite to this purpose, lib. viii. c. 3. 'Ejusdem verbi aut sermonis iteratio, quanquam non magnopere summis authoribus vitata, interim vitium videri potest; in quod sæpe incidit etiam Cicero, securus tam parvæ observationis.' He brings an instance of it from his oration for Cluentius, 'Non solum igitur illud judicium, judicii simile, judices, non fuit.' It must be confessed, that the sense is not only darkened, but the ear shocked at the repetition of the same word in the same period.

This is a very pregnant instance, that the opinion of an evil demon or genius prevailed in the days of Homer: but this excuse of Elpenor, in ascribing his calamity to a demon, gives great offence to Maximus Tyrius, he being a stoic philosopher. He says Elpenor is guilty of falsehood in this excuse to Ulysses; for demons, *parcæ*, &c. are nothing but the idle pretext of wicked men, who are industrious to transfer their own follies to the gods, according to those verses in the beginning of the Odyssey:

' Why charge mankind on heav'n their own offence,
 And call their woes the crime of providence?
 Blind! who themselves their miseries create,
 And perish by their folly, not their fate.'

By thy fond consort! by thy father's cares!
 By lov'd Telemachus's blooming years!
 For well I know that soon the heav'nly pow'rs 85
 Will give thee back to day, and Circe's shores:
 There pious on my cold remains attend,
 There call to mind thy poor departed friend,
 The tribute of a tear is all I crave,
 And the possession of a peaceful grave. 90
 But if unheard, in vain compassion plead,
 Revere the gods, the gods avènge the dead!
 A tomb along the wat'ry margin raise,
 The tomb with manly arms and trophies grace,
 To shew posterity Elpenor was. 95
 There high in air, memorial of my name,
 Fix the smooth oar, and bid me live to fame.

To whom with tears: These rites, oh mournful shade
 Due to thy ghost, shall to thy ghost be paid.

Still as I spoke the phantom seem'd to moan, 100
 Tear follow'd tear, and groan succeeded groan.
 But as my waving sword the blood surrounds,
 The shade withdrew, and mutter'd empty sounds.

There as the wond'rous visions I survey'd,
 All pale ascends my royal mother's shade: 105

V. 105. *All pale ascends my royal mother's shade.*] The behaviour of Ulysses with respect to his mother may appear not sufficiently tender and affectionate; he refrains all manner of address to her, a conduct which may be censured as inconsistent with filial piety; but Plutarch very fully answers this objection. 'It is (says that author) a remarkable instance of the prudence of Ulysses, who descending into

A queen, to Troy she saw our legions pass ;
Now a thin form is all Anticlea was !
Struck at the sight I melt with filial woe,
And down my cheek the pious sorrows flow :
Yet as I shook my falchion o'er the blood, 110
Regardless of her son the parent stood.

When lo! the mighty Theban I behold ;
To guide his steps he bore a staff of gold :
Awful he trod ! majestic was his look !
And from his holy lips these accents broke. 115

Why, mortal, wand'rest thou from cheerful day,
To tread the downward, melancholy way ?
What angry gods to these dark regions led
Thee yet alive, companion of the dead ?
But sheathe thy poniard, while my tongue relates 120
Heav'n's steadfast purpose, and thy future fates.

the regions of the dead, refused all conference even with his mother, till he had obtained an answer from Tiresias, concerning the business which induced him to undertake that infernal journey.' A wise man is not inquisitive about things impertinent; accordingly Ulysses first shews himself a wise man, and then a dutiful son. Besides, it is very judicious in Homer thus to describe Ulysses: the whole design of the *Odyssey* is the return of Ulysses to his country; this is the mark at which the hero should continually aim, and therefore it is necessary that all other incidents should be subordinate to this; and the poet had been blameable if he had shewed Ulysses entertaining himself with amusements, and postponing the considerations of the chief design of the *Odyssey*. Lucian speaks to the same purpose in his piece upon astrology.

V. 120. *But sheathe thy poniard — —*] The terror which the shades of the departed express at the sight of the sword of Ulysses has

While yet he spoke, the prophet I obey'd,
 And in the scabbard plung'd the glitt'ring blade:
 Eager he quaff'd the gore, and then exprest
 Dark things to come, the counsels of his breast. 125

Weary of light, Ulysses here explores,
 A prosp'rous voyage to his native shores:
 But know—by me unerring Fates disclose
 New trains of dangers, and new scenes of woes;

been frequently censured as absurd and ridiculous: 'Risum cui non moveat,' says Scaliger, 'cum enseni ait et vulnera metuisse?' 'What have the dead to fear from a sword, who are beyond the power of it, by being reduced to an incorporeal shadow?' But this description is consistent with the notions of the ancients concerning the dead. I have already remarked, that the shades retained a vehicle, which resembled the body, and was liable to pain as well as the corporeal substance; if not, to what purpose are the Furies described with iron scourges, or the vulture tearing the liver of Tityus?

Virgil ascribes the like fears to the shades in the *Æneis*; for the Sibyl thus commands *Æneas*:

'Tuque invade viam, vaginâque eripe ferrum.'

And the shades of the Greeks are there said to fly at the sight of his arms.

'At Danaüm proccres, Agamemnoniæque Phalanges
 Ut vidêre virum, fulgentiaque arma per umbras
 Ingenti trepidare metu.'

Tiresias is here described consistently with the character before given him by the poet, I mean with a pre-eminence above the other shades; for (as Eustathius observes) he knows Ulysses before he tastes the ingredients; a privilege not claimed by any other of the infernal inhabitants. Elpenor indeed did the same, but for another reason; because he was not yet buried, nor entered the regions of the dead, and therefore his soul was yet entire.

I see! I see, thy bark by Neptune tost, 130
 For injur'd Cyclops, and his eye-ball lost!
 Yet to thy woes the gods decree an end,
 If heav'n thou please; and how to please attend!
 Where on Trinacrian rocks the ocean roars,
 Graze num'rous herds along the verdant shores; 135
 Though hunger press, yet fly the dang'rous prey,
 The herds are sacred to the god of day,
 Who all surveys with his extensive eye
 Above, below, on earth and in the sky!
 Rob not the god, and so propitious gales 140
 Attend thy voyage, and impel thy sails;
 But if his herds ye seize, beneath the waves
 I see thy friends o'erwhelm'd in liquid graves!
 The direful wreck Ulysses scarce survives!
 Ulysses at his country scarce arrives! 145
 Strangers thy guides! nor there thy labours end,
 New foes arise, domestic ills attend!
 There foul adult'ers to thy bride resort,
 And lordly gluttons riot in thy court.

V. 145. *Ulysses at his country scarce arrives!*] The poet conducts this interview with admirable judgment. The whole design of Ulysses is to engage the Phæacians in his favour, in order to his transportation to his own country: how does he bring this about? By shewing that it was decreed by the gods that he should be conducted thither by strangers; so that the Phæacians immediately conclude, that they are the people destined by heaven to conduct him home; to give this the greater weight, he puts the speech into the mouth of the prophet Tiresias, and exalts his character in an extraordinary manner, to strengthen the credit of the prediction: by this method likewise the

But vengeance hastes amain! These eyes behold 150
 The deathful scene, princes on princes roll'd!
 That done, a people far from sea explore,
 Who ne'er knew salt, or heard the billows roar,

poet interweaves his episode into the texture and essence of the poem; he makes this journey into hell contribute to the restoration of his hero, and unites the subordinate parts very happily with the main action.

V. 152. *That done, a people far from sea explore,*
Who ne'er knew salt. — —]

It is certain that Tiresias speaks very obscurely, after the manner of the oracles; but the ancients generally understood this people to be the Epirots. Thus Pausanias in his Attics. *Οι μηδε αλασσης ιλιε θαλασσαν, μηδε αλσιν ηπισταντο χρησηθαι, μαρτυρει δε μοι και Ομηρος επ' οδυσσεια.*

— — *Οι εκ ιασσι θαλασσαν.*

That is; 'The Epirots, even so lately as after the taking of Troy, were ignorant of the sea, and the use of salt, as Homer testifies in his Odyssey:

'Who ne'er knew salt, or heard the billows roar.'

So that they who were ignorant of the sea, were likewise ignorant of the use of salt, according to Homer: whence it may be conjectured, that the poet knew of no salt but what was made of sea-water. The other token of their ignorance of the sea was, that they should not know an oar, but call it a corn-van. This verse was once sarcastically applied to Philip of Macedon by Amerdion a Grecian, who flying from him, and being apprehended, was asked whither he fled? He bravely answered, to find a people who knew not Philip.

Εισακε τις αφικωμαι, οι εκ ιασσι Φιλιππον.

I persuade myself that this passage is rightly translated; *Νεας φοινικοπαρης*, and *τα τε πτερα νευσι πελονται*.

'A painted wonder, flying on the main,'

Or saw gay vessel stem the wat'ry plain,
 A painted wonder flying on the main! 155
 Bear on thy back an oar: with strange amaze
 A shepherd meeting thee, the oar surveys,
 And names a van: there fix it on the plain,
 To calm the god that holds the wat'ry reign;
 A threefold off'ring to his altar bring, 160
 A bull, a ram, a boar; and hail the ocean king.
 But home return'd, to each ethereal pow'r
 Slay the due victim in the genial hour:

for the wings of the ship signify the sails (as Eustathius remarks), and not the oars, as we might be misled to conclude from the immediate connexion with *ερετμα*, or oars. The poet, I believe, intended to express the wonder of a person upon his first sight of a ship, who observing it to move swiftly along the seas, might mistake the sails for wings, according to that beautiful description of Mr. Dryden upon a like occasion in his *Indian Emperor*.

'The objects I could first distinctly view,
 Were tall straight trees which on the waters flew;
 Wings on their sides instead of leaves did grow,
 Which gather'd all the breath the winds could blow;
 And at their roots grew floating palaces,' &c.

Eustathius tells us the reason of this command given to Ulysses, to search out a people ignorant of the sea: it was in honour of Neptune, to make his name regarded by a nation which was entirely a stranger to that deity; and this injunction was laid by way of atonement for the violence offered to his son Polyphemus.

Many critics have imagined that this passage is corrupted; but, as Eustathius observes, we have the authority of Sophocles to prove it genuine, who alluding to this passage, writes,

ὦμοις ἀθηροῦρωτον ὀρῶγον φερῶν.

So peaceful shalt thou end thy blissful days,
 And steal thyself from life by slow decays: 165
 Unknown to pain, in age resign thy breath,
 When late stern Neptune points the shaft with death:
 To the dark grove retiring as to rest,
 Thy people blessing, by thy people blest!

V. 167. *When late stern Neptune points the shaft with death.* The death of Ulysses is related variously, but the following account is chiefly credited: Ulysses had a son by Circe named Telegonus, who being grown to years of maturity, sailed to Ithaca in search of his father; where seizing some sheep for the use of his attendants, the shepherds put themselves into a posture to rescue them; Ulysses being advertised of it, went with his son Telemachus to repel Telegonus, who in defending himself wounded Ulysses, not knowing him to be his father. Thus Ophius, Hyginus, and Dictys relate the story. Many poets have brought this upon the stage, and Aristotle criticizing upon one of these tragedies gives us the title of it, which was, 'Ulysses Wounded.' But if Ulysses thus died, how can Neptune be said to 'point the shaft with death?' We are informed that the spear with which Telegonus gave the wound, was pointed with the bone of a sea turtle; so that literally his death came from the sea, or ἐξ ἁλός: and Neptune being the god of the ocean, his death may without violence be ascribed to that deity. It is true, some critics read ἐξ ἁλός as one word, and then it will signify that Ulysses should escape the dangers of the sea, and die upon the continent far from it; but the former sense is most consonant to the tenor of the poem, through which Neptune is constantly represented as an enemy to Ulysses.

I will only add the reason why Ulysses is enjoined to offer a bull, a ram, and a boar to Neptune: the bull represents the roaring of the sea in storms; the ram the milder appearance of it when in tranquillity: the boar was used by the ancients as an emblem of fecundity, to represent the fruitfulness of the ocean. This particular sacrifice of three animals was called τριπύα. EUSTATHIUS.

Unerring truths, oh man, my lips relate; 170
This is thy life to come, and this is fate.

To whom unmov'd: If this the gods prepare;
What heav'n ordains, the wise with courage bear.
But say, why yonder on the lonely strands,
Unmindful of her son, Anticlea stands? 175
Why to the ground she bends her downcast eye?
Why is she silent, while her son is nigh?
The latent cause, oh sacred Seer, reveal!

Nor this, replies the seer, will I conceal.
Know; to the spectres, that thy bev'rage taste, 180
The scenes of life recur, and actions past;
They, seal'd with truth, return the sure reply;
The rest, repell'd, a train oblivious fly.

The phantom-prophet ceas'd, and sunk from sight
To the black palace of eternal night. 185

Still in the dark abodes of death I stood,
When near Anticlea mov'd, and drank the blood.
Straight all the mother in her soul awakes,
And owning her Ulysses, thus she speaks.
Com'st thou, my son, alive, to realms beneath, 190
The dolesome realms of darkness and of death:
Com'st thou alive from pure, ethereal day?
Dire is the region, dismal is the way!
Here lakes profound, there floods oppose their waves,
There the wide sea with all his billows raves! 195

V. 195. *There the wide sea with all his billows raves.*] If this passage were literally translated, it would run thus: 'My son, how

Or (since to dust proud Troy submits her tow'rs)
 Com'st thou a wand'rer from the Phrygian shores?
 Or say, since honour call'd thee to the field,
 Hast thou thy Ithaca, thy bride beheld?

Source of my life, I cry'd, from earth I fly 200
 To seek Tiresias in the nether sky,
 To learn my doom: for tost from woe to woe,
 In ev'ry land Ulysses finds a foe:
 Nor have these eyes beheld my native shores,
 Since in the dust proud Troy submits her tow'rs. 205

didst thou arrive at this place of darkness, when so many rivers, and the ocean lie in the midway?' This (says Eustathius) plainly shews that Homer uses a fabulous geography; for whereas the places that are mentioned in these voyages of Ulysses are really situated upon the Mediterranean, Anticlea here says that they lie in the middle of the ocean. But this is undoubtedly an error: the whole of the observation depends upon the word *μεσσω*; but why must this denote the midway so exactly? Is it not sufficient to say, that between Ithaca and this infernal region, rivers and the ocean roll? And that this is the real meaning is evident from this book; for Ulysses sails in the space of one day from the island of Circe to the place where he descends: how then could these places where Ulysses touches in his voyage lie in the middle of the ocean, unless we can suppose he passed half the ocean in one day? The poet directly affirms, that he descends at the extremity of it; but this extremity is no more than one day's voyage from the island of Circe, and consequently that island could not lie in the middle of the ocean: therefore this place is no evidence that Homer uses a fabulous geography.

Eustathius very justly observes, that Homer judiciously places the descent into hell at the extremity of the ocean; for it is natural to imagine that to be the only passage to it, by which the sun and the stars themselves appear to descend, and sink into the realms of darkness.

But, when thy soul from her sweet mansion fled,
Say, what distemper gave thee to the dead?
Has life's fair lamp declin'd by slow decays,
Or swift expir'd it in a sudden blaze?
Say, if my sire, good old Laertes, lives? 210
If yet Telemachus, my son, survives?
Say, by his rule is my dominion aw'd,
Or crush'd by traitors with an iron rod?
Say, if my spouse maintains her royal trust,
Though tempted chaste, and obstinately just? 215
Or if no more her absent lord she wails,
But the false woman o'er the wife prevails?

Thus I, and thus the parent-shade returns.
Thee, ever thee, thy faithful consort mourns:

V. 218. — — *Thus the parent-shade returns*] The questions which Ulysses asks (remarks Eustathius) could not fail of having a very good effect upon his Phæacian audience: by them he very artfully (and, as it seems, undesignedly) lets them into the knowledge of his dignity, and shews the importance of his person; to induce them to a greater care to conduct him to his country. The process of the whole story is so artfully carried on, that Ulysses seems only to relate an accidental interview, while he tacitly recommends himself, and lets them know the person who asks their assistance is a king. It is observable that Anticlea inverts the order in her answer, and replies last to the first question. Orators always reserve the strongest argument for the conclusion, to leave it fresh upon the memory of their auditors; or rather, the poet uses this method to introduce the sorrow of Ulysses for the death of his mother more naturally: he steals away the mind of the reader from attending the main action, to enliven it with a scene of tenderness and affection in these regions of horror.

Whether the night descends, or day prevails, 220
 Thee she by night, and thee by day bewails,
 Thee in Telemachus thy realm obeys;
 In sacred groves celestial rites he pays,
 And shares the banquet in superior state,
 Grac'd with such honours as become the great. 225
 Thy sire in solitude foment's his care:
 The court is joyless, for thou art not there!
 No costly carpets raise his hoary head,
 No rich embroid'ry shines to grace his bed:
 Ev'n when keen winter freezes in the skies, 230
 Rank'd with his slaves, on earth the monarch lies:
 Deep are his sighs, his visage pale, his dress
 The garb of woe and habit of distress.

V. 224. *And shares the banquet in superior state, &c.*] This passage is fully explained by Eustathius: he tells us, that it was an ancient custom to invite kings and legislators to all public feasts; this was to do them honour: and the chief seat was always reserved for the chief magistrate. Without this observation the lines are unintelligible. It is evident that the words are not spoken of sacrifices or feasts made to the gods, but social entertainments, for they are general, *πάντες καλεῖσσι*, 'all the people of the realm invite Telemachus to their feasts.' And this seems to have been a right due to the chief magistrate, for *ἀλεγονεῖν* implies it, which word Eustathius explains by *ἐν λόγῳ ποιεῖσθαι*; 'such an honour as ought not to be neglected,' or

'Grac'd with such honours as become the great.'

It gives a very happy image of those ages of the world, when we observe such an intercourse between the king and the subject: the idea of power carries no terror in it, but the ruler himself makes a part of the public joy.

And when the autumn takes his annual round,
 The leafy honours scatt'ring on the ground; 235
 Regardless of his years, abroad he lies,
 His bed the leaves, his canopy the skies.
 Thus cares on cares his painful days consume,
 And bow his age with sorrow to the tomb!

For thee, my son, I wept my life away; 240
 For thee through hell's eternal dungeons stray:
 Nor came my fate by ling'ring pains and slow,
 Nor bent the silver-shafted queen her bow;
 No dire disease bereav'd me of my breath;
 Thou, thou, my son, wert my disease and death; 245
 Unkindly with my love my son conspir'd,
 For thee I liv'd, for absent thee expir'd.

Thrice in my arms I strove her shade to bind,
 Thrice through my arms she slipp'd like empty wind,
 Or dreams, the vain illusions of the mind. 250

V. 248. *Thrice in my arms I strove her shade to bind,*
Thrice through my arms — —]

This passage plainly shews that the vehicles of the departed were believed by the ancients to be of an aerial substance, and retain nothing of corporeal grossness.

Virgil has borrowed these verses.

'Ter conatus ibi collo dare brachia circum;
 Ter frustra comprensa manus effugit imago,
 Par levibus ventis, volucrique simillima somno.'

Scaliger gives the preference to the Roman poet, because he uses three verses, at a time when the word *ter* occurs in the description, whereas Homer concludes in little more than two lines. But this is not cri-

Wild with despair, I shed a copious tide
Of flowing tears, and thus with sighs reply'd.

Fly'st thou, lov'd shade, while I thus fondly mourn?
Turn to my arms, to my embraces turn!

Is it, ye pow'rs that smile at human harms! 255

Too great a bliss to weep within her arms?

Or has hell's queen an empty image sent,
That wretched I might ev'n my joys lament?

O son of woe, the pensive shade rejoin'd,
Oh most inur'd to grief of all mankind! 260

'Tis not the queen of hell who thee deceives:

All, all are such, when life the body leaves;

No more the substance of the man remains,

Nor bounds the blood along the purple veins:

These the funereal flames in atoms bear, 265

To wander with the wind in empty air;

ticising, but trifling; and ascribing to an author what the author himself had no thought of. This puts me in mind of a story in Lucian, where a person of a strong imagination, thinking there was a mystery in *μῆνιν*, the first word in the Iliad, is introduced inquiring of Homer in the regions of the dead, why he placed it in the beginning of his poem? he answers, Because it first came into his head. I doubt not but the number of the lines in this place in both poets was equally accidental; Virgil adds nothing to the thought of Homer, though he uses more words.

V. 256. — — *A bliss to weep within her arms.*] This is almost a literal translation; the words in the Greek are, *τὴν ἐν τῇ κόλπῳ γοοῖο*, or 'that we may delight ourselves with sorrow,' which Eustathius explains by saying, 'there is a pleasure in weeping.' I should rather understand the words to signify, that in the instant while he is rejoicing at the sight of his mother, he is compelled to turn his joy into tears, to find the whole scene a delusion.

While the impassive soul reluctant flies,
Like a vain dream, to these infernal skies.
But from the dark dominions speed thy way,
And climb the steep ascent to upper day; 270
To thy chaste bride the wond'rous story tell,
The woes, the horrors, and the laws of hell.

Thus while she spoke, in swarms hell's empress brings
Daughters and wives of heroes and of kings;
Thick, and more thick they gather round the blood,
Ghost throng'd on ghost (a dire assembly) stood! 276
Dauntless my sword I seize: the airy crew,
Swift as it flash'd along the gloom, withdrew;
Then shade to shade in mutual forms succeeds,
Her race recounts, and their illustrious deeds. 280

V. 279. *Then shade to shade — — succeeds.*] Nothing can better shew the invention of Homer, than his capacity of furnishing out a scene of such great variety in this infernal region. He calls up the heroes of former ages from a state of inexistence to adorn and diversify his poetry. If it be asked what relation this journey into hell has to the main action of the *Odyssey*? the answer is, It has an episodic affinity with it, and shews the sufferings of Ulysses more than any of his voyages upon the ocean, as it is more horrible and full of terrors. What a treasury of ancient history and fables has he opened by this descent? He lets us into a variety of different characters of the most famous personages recorded in ancient story; and at the same time lays before us a supplement to the *Iliad*. If Virgil paid a happy piece of flattery to the Romans, by introducing the greatest persons of the best families in Rome, in his descent in the *Æneid*; Homer no less happily interests the Grecians in his story, by honouring the ancestors of the noblest families who still flourished in Greece, in the *Odyssey*; a circumstance that could not fail of being very accept-

Tyro began: whom great Salmoneus bred;
 The royal partner of fam'd Cretheus' bed.
 For fair Enipeus, as from fruitful urns
 He pours his wat'ry store, the virgin burns;

able to a Grecian or Roman reader, but perhaps less entertaining to us, who have no particular interest in these stories.

V. 281. *Tyro — — whom great Salmoneus bred.*] Virgil gives a very different character of Salmoneus from this of Homer; he describes him as an impious person who presumed to imitate the thunder of Jupiter, whereas Homer stiles him blameless, or *αμωμων*; an argument, says Eustathius, that the preceding story is a fable invented since the days of Homer. This may perhaps be true, and we may naturally conclude it to be true from his silence of it, but not from the epithet *αμωμων*; for in the first book of the *Odyssey*, Jupiter gives the same appellation to *Ægyastus*, even while he condemns him of murder and adultery. Eustathius adds, that Salmoneus was a great proficient in mechanics, and inventor of a vessel called *βρονταειον*, which imitated thunder by rolling stones in it, which gave occasion to the fictions of the poets.

V. 283. *For fair Enipeus, as from fruitful urns
 He pours his wat'ry store, the virgin burns.*]

There are no fables in the poets that seem more bold than these concerning the commerce between women and river gods; but Eustathius gives us a probable solution: I will translate him literally. It was customary for young virgins to resort frequently to rivers to bathe in them; and the ancients have very well explained these fables about the intercourse between them and the water gods: 'Receive my virginity, O Scamander!' says a lady; but it is very apparent who this Scamander was: her lover Cimon lay concealed in the reeds. This was a good excuse for female frailty, in ages of credulity: for such imaginary intercourse between the fair sex and deities was not only believed, but esteemed honourable. No doubt the ladies were frequently deceived; their lovers personated the deities, and they took a Cimon to their arms in the disguise of a Scamander.

Smooth flows the gentle stream with wanton pride,
 And in soft mazes rolls a silver tide. 286
 As on his banks the maid enamour'd roves,
 The monarch of the deep beholds and loves;
 In her Enipeus' form and borrow'd charms,
 The am'rous god descends into her arms: 290
 Around, a spacious arch of waves he throws,
 And high in air the liquid mountain rose;
 Thus in surrounding floods conceal'd he proves
 The pleasing transport, and completes his loves.
 Then softly sighing, he the fair address, 295
 And as he spoke her tender hand he prest.
 Hail, happy nymph! no vulgar births are ow'd
 To the prolific raptures of a god:
 Lo! when nine times the moon renews her horn,
 Two brother heroes shall from thee be born; 300
 Thy early care the future worthies claim,
 To point them to the arduous paths of fame;
 But in thy breast th' important truth conceal,
 Nor dare the secret of a god reveal:

It is uncertain where this Enipeus flows: Strabo (says Eustathius) imagines it to be a river of Peloponnesus, that disembogues its waters into the Alphæus; for the Thessalian river is Eniseus, and not Enipeus: this rises from mount Othrys, and receives into it the Epidanus. The former seems to be the river intended by Homer, for it takes its source from a village called Salmone; and what strengthens this conjecture is the neighbourhood of the Ocean (or Neptune in this fable) to that river. Lucian has made this story of Enipeus the subject of one of his dialogues.

For know, thou Neptune view'st! and at my nod 305
Earth trembles, and the waves confess their god.

He added not, but mounting spurn'd the plain,
Then plung'd into the chambers of the main.

Now in the time's full process forth she brings
Jove's dread vicegerents, in two future kings; 310
O'er proud Iolcos Pelias stretch'd his reign,
And god-like Neleus rul'd the Pylia plain:
Then fruitful, to her Cretheus' royal bed
She gallant Pheres and fam'd Æson bred:
From the same fountain Amythaon rose, 315
Pleas'd with the din of war, and noble shout of foes.

There mov'd Antiope with haughty charms,
Who bless'd th' almighty thund'rer in her arms:
Hence sprung Amphion, hence brave Zethus came,
Founders of Thebes, and men of mighty name; 320

V. 319. *Hence sprung Amphion* — —] The fable of Thebes built by the power of music is not mentioned by Homer, and therefore may be supposed to be of later invention. Homer relates many circumstances in these short histories differently from his successors; Epicaste is called Jocasta, and the tragedians have entirely varied the story of Oedipus: they tell us he tore out his eyes, that he was driven from Thebes, and being conducted by his daughter Antigone, arrived at Athens, where entering the temple of the furies, he died in the midst of a furious storm, and was carried by it into hell: whereas Homer directly affirms, that he continued to reign in Thebes after all his calamities.

It is not easy to give a reason why the mother, and not the father, is said to send the furies to torment Oedipus, especially because he was the murderer of his father Louis: Eustathius answers, that it was by accident that he slew Laius; but upon the discovery of his wicked-

Though bold in open field, they yet surround
 The town with walls, and mound inject on mound;
 Here ramparts stood, there tow'rs rose high in air,
 And here through sev'n wide portals rush'd the war.

There with soft step the fair Alcmena trod, 325
 Who bore Alcides to the thund'ring god;
 And Megara, who charm'd the son of Jove,
 And soften'd his stern soul to tender love.

Sullen and sour with discontented mien
 Jocasta frown'd, th' incestuous Theban queen; 330
 With her own son she join'd in nuptial bands,
 Though father's blood imbru'd his murd'rous hands:
 The gods and men the dire offence detest,
 The gods with all their furics rend his breast:

ness in marrying his mother Jocasta, he used her with more barbarity and rigour than was necessary, and therefore she pursues him with her vengeance. Jocasta and Dido both die after the same manner by their own hands: I agree with Scaliger, that Virgil has described hanging more happily than Homer.

‘ Informis Lethi nodum trabe nectit ab altâ.’

Αψαμμένη βρογχον αιπυγ αφ' υψηλοιο μελαθρα.

There is nothing like the ‘ Informis Lethi nodus’ in Homer: and as that critic observes, ‘ tam atrox res aliquo verborum ambitu studiosius comprehendenda fuit.’ The story of Oedipus is this: Laius being informed by the oracle, that he should be slain by his son, caused Oedipus immediately to be exposed by his shepherds to wild beasts; but the shepherds preserved him, and gave him education: when he came to years of maturity he went towards Thebes in search of his father, but meeting Laius by the way, and a quarrel arising, he slew him ignorantly, and married Jocasta his mother. This is the subject of two tragedies in Sophocles.

In lofty Thebes he wore th' imperial crown, 335
 A pompous wretch! accurs'd upon a throne.
 The wife self-murder'd from a beam depends,
 And her foul soul to blackest hell descends;
 Thence to her son the choicest plagues she brings,
 And the fiends haunt him with a thousand stings.

And now the beauteous Chloris I descry, 341
 A lovely shade, Amphion's youngest joy!
 With gifts unnumber'd Neleus sought her arms,
 Nor paid too dearly for unquall'd charms;
 Great in Orchomenos, in Pylos great, 345
 He sway'd the sceptre with imperial state.
 Three gallant sons the joyful monarch told,
 Sage Nestor, Periclimenus the bold,

V. 341. — — *The beauteous Chloris I descry.*] A critic ought not only to endeavour to point out the beauties in the sense, but also in the versification of a poet: Dionysius Halicarnassus cites these two verses as peculiarly flowing and harmonious.

Και Χλωριν ειδον περικαλλεα, την ποιε Νελευς
 Γημεν εον δια Καλλῶ, επει πορε μυρια ενδα.

There is not one elision, nor one rough vowel or consonant, but they flow along with the utmost smoothness, and the beauty of the muse equals that of Chloris.

V. 345. *Great in Orchomenos* — —] This is a very considerable city lying between Bœotia and Phocis, upon the river Cephissus: Homer calls it the Minyan Orchomenos, because the Minyans an ancient people inhabited it; it was the colony of these Minyans that sailed to Iolcos, and gave name to the Argonauts. EUSTATHIUS.

V. 348. — — *Periclimenus the bold.*] The reason why Homer gives this epithet to Periclimenus may be learned from Hesiod: Neptune gave him the power to change himself into all shapes, but he

And Chromius last; but of the softer race,
 One nymph alone, a miracle of grace. 350
 Kings on their thrones for lovely Pero burn,
 The sire denies, and kings rejected mourn.
 To him alone the beauteous prize he yields,
 Whose arm should ravish from Phylacian fields
 The herds of Iphyclus, detain'd in wrong; 355
 Wild, furious herds, unconquerably strong!
 This dares a seer, but nought the seer prevails,
 In beauty's cause illustriously he fails;

was slain by Hercules: Periclimenus assaulted that hero in the shape of a bee, or fly, who discovering him in that disguise, by the means of Pallas slew him with his club. This is the person of whom Ovid speaks, but adds that he was slain in the shape of an eagle by Hercules.

‘Mira Piriclimeni mors est, cui posse figuras
 Sumere quas vellet, rursusque reponere sumptas,
 Neptunus dederat,’ &c.

Euphorion speaks of him in the shape of a bee or fly.

— — Ἀλλοῖε δ' αὐτὲ μελισσῶν ἀγλαὰ φυλά
 Ἀλλοῖε δεινὸς ὄφης — —

V. 357. *This dares a seer, &c.*] This story is related with great obscurity, but we learn from the xvth book that the name of this prophet was Melampus. Iphyclus was the son of Deioneus, and uncle to Tyro; he had seized upon the goods of Tyro the mother of Neleus, among which were many beautiful oxen: these Neleus demands, but is unjustly denied by Iphyclus: Neleus had a daughter named Pero, a great beauty who was courted by all the neighbouring princes, but the father refuses her unless to the man who recovers these oxen from Iphyclus: Bias was in love with Pero, and persuades his brother Melampus, a prophet, to undertake the recovery; he attempts it, but

Twelve moons the foe the captive youth detains
 In painful dungeons, and coercive chains; 360
 The foe at last, from durance where he lay,
 His art revering, gave him back to day;
 Won by prophetic knowledge, to fulfil
 The steadfast purpose of th' almighty will.

being vanquished, is thrown into prison; but at last set at liberty, for telling Iphycus, who was childless, how to procure issue. Iphycus upon this gave him the oxen for a reward.

Nothing can be more ridiculous than the explanation of this story in Eustathius, which I will lay before the reader for his entertainment. Melampus, after he was made a prisoner, was trusted to the care of a man and a woman; the man used him with mercy, and the woman with cruelty: one day he heard a low noise, and a family of worms in conference. (He understood the language of all the animal creation, beasts and reptiles.) These worms were discoursing how they had eaten through a great beam that lay over the head of Melampus: he immediately provides for his own safety, feigns a sickness, and begs to be carried into the fresh air: the woman and the man immediately comply with this request; at which instant the beam falling, kills the woman: an account of this is forthwith carried to Iphycus, who sending for Melampus, asks who he is? He tells him, a prophet, and that he came for the oxen of Neleus: Iphycus commands him to declare how he may have an heir? Melampus kills an ox, and calls all the birds of the air to feast on it; they all appear except the vulture; he proposes the case to them, but they give no satisfactory answer; at last the vulture appears, and gives Melampus a full information: upon this Iphycus obtains a child, and Melampus the oxen of Neleus.

V. 364. *The steadfast purpose of th' almighty will.*] These words, *δῖος ὁ ἐρελκιστὸ βελὴν*, seem to come in without any connexion with the story, and consequently unnecessarily; but Homer speaks of it concisely, as an adventure well known in his times, and therefore not wanting a further explication: but Apollodorus relates the whole at

With graceful port advancing now I spy'd 365
 Leda the fair, the godlike Tyndar's bride:
 Hence Pollux sprung who wields with furious sway
 The deathful gauntlet, matchless in the fray:
 And Castor, glorious on th' embattled plain
 Curbs the proud steed, reluctant to the rein: 370
 By turns they visit this ethereal sky,
 And live alternate, and alternate die:
 In hell beneath, on earth, in heav'n above
 Reign the twin-gods, the fav'rite sons of Jove.

There Ephimedia trod the gloomy plain, 375
 Who charm'd the monarch of the boundless main;
 Hence Ephialtes, hence stern Otus sprung,
 More fierce than giants, more than giants strong;

large, lib. i. The reason why these words are inserted is, to inform us that there were ancient prophecies concerning Iphycus, that it was decreed by Jupiter he should have no children till he had recourse to a prophet, who explaining these prophecies to him, should shew him how to obtain that blessing: in this sense the will of Jupiter may be said to be fulfilled.

V. 372. *And live alternate, and alternate die.*] Castor and Pollux are called *Διοσκουροι*, or the sons of Jupiter; but what could give occasion to this fiction, of their living and dying alternately? Eustathius informs us that it is a physical allegory: they represent the two hemispheres of the world; the one of which is continually enlightened by the sun, and consequently the other is then in darkness: and these being successively illuminated according to the order of the day and night, one of these sons of Jupiter may be said to revive when one part of the world rises into day, and the other to die, when it descends into darkness. What makes this allegory the more probable is, that Jupiter denotes, in many allegories of Homer, the air, or the upper regions of it.

The earth o'erburden'd groan'd beneath their weight,
 None but Orion e'er surpass'd their height: 380
 The wond'rous youths had scarce nine winters told,
 When high in air, tremendous to behold,
 Nine ells aloft they rear'd their tow'ring head,
 And full nine cubits broad their shoulders spread.

V. 383. *Nine ells aloft they rear'd their tow'ring head.*] This is undoubtedly a very bold fiction, and has been censured by some critics as monstrous, and praised by others as sublime. It may seem utterly incredible that any human creatures could be nine ells, that is, eleven yards and a quarter in height, at the age of nine years. But it may vindicate Homer as a poet to say that he only made use of a fable, that had been transmitted down from the earliest times of the world; for so early the war between the gods and giants was supposed to be. There might a rational account be given of these apparent incredibilities; if I might be allowed to say what many authors of great name have conjectured, that these stories are only traditional, and all founded upon the ejection of the fallen angels from heaven, and the wars they had with the good angels to regain their stations. If this might be allowed, we shall then have real giants, who endeavoured to take heaven by assault; then nothing can be invented by a poet so boldly, as to exceed what may justly be believed of these beings: then the stories of heaping mountain upon mountain will come within the bounds of credibility. But without having recourse to this solution, Longinus brings this passage as an instance of true sublimity, chap. vi. He is proving that the sublime is sometimes found without the pathetic, for some passions are mean, as fear, sadness, sorrow, and consequently incapable of sublimity; and on the other hand, there are many things great and sublime, in which there is no passion; of this kind is what Homer says concerning Otus, and Ephialtes, with so much boldness.

'The gods they challenge, and affect the skies.'

And what he adds concerning the success of these giants is still bolder.

Proud of their strength and more than mortal size,
 'The gods they challenge, and affect the skies; 386

'Had they to manhood grown, the bright abodes
 Of heav'n had shook, and gods been heap'd on gods.'

Virgil was of the opinion of Longinus, for he has imitated Homer.

'Hic et Aloidas geminos immania vidi
 Corpora, qui manibus magnum rescindere cælum
 Aggressi, superisque Jovem detrudere regnis.'

Macrobius, lib. v. Saturn. cap. xiii. judges these verses to be inferior to Homer's in majesty; in Homer we have the height and breadth of these giants, and he happily paints the very size of their limbs in the run of his poetry; two words, *εὐσευγοί*, and *εὐνεαπτηχέες*, almost make one verse, designedly chosen to express their bulk in the turn of the words; but Virgil says only 'immania corpora,' and makes no addition concerning the giants, omitting entirely the circumstance of their size: Homer relates the piling hill upon hill; Virgil barely adds, that they endeavoured to storm the heavens.

Scaliger is firm and faithful to Virgil, and vindicates his favourite in the true spirit of criticism: I persuade myself he glances at Macrobius, for he cavils at those instances which he produces as beauties in Homer; I give his answer in his own words. 'Admirantur Græculi pueriles mensuras; nimis sæpe cogor exclamare, aliud esse Græculum circulatorem, aliud regiae orationis authorem: indignam censuit suâ majestate Virgilius hanc minutam superstitionem,' &c.

Eustathius remarks that the ancients greatly admired the exact proportion of these giants, for the body is of a due symmetry; when the thickness is three degrees less than the height of it. According to this account the giants grew one cubit every year in bulk, and three in height. Homer says, that they fell by the shafts of Apollo, that is, they died suddenly; but other writers relate, that as they were hunting, Diana sent a stag between them, at which both at once aiming their weapons, and she withdrawing the stag, they fell by their own darts. EUSTATHIUS.

Heav'd on Olympus tott'ring Ossa stood;
 On Ossa, Pelion nods with all his wood:
 Such were they youths! had they to manhood grown,
 Almighty Jove had trembled on his throne. 390
 But ere the harvest of the beard began
 To bristle on the chin, and promise man,
 His shafts Apollo aim'd; at once they sound,
 And stretch the giant-monster's o'er the ground. 394
 There mournful Phædra with sad Procris moves,
 Both beauteous shades, both hapless in their loves;

V. 387. — — *On Olympus tott'ring Ossa stood, &c.*] Strabo takes notice of the judgment of Homer, in placing the mountains in this order; they all stand in Macedonia: Olympus is the largest, and therefore he makes it the basis upon which Ossa stands, that being the next to Olympus in magnitude, and Pelion, being the least, is placed above Ossa, and thus they rise pyramidically. Virgil follows a different regulation:

'Ter sunt conati imponere Pelion Ossæ,
 Scilicet atque Ossæ frondosum imponere Olympum.'

Here the largest mountain is placed upmost, not so naturally, as in the order of Homer. There is a peculiar beauty in the former of these verses, in which Virgil makes the two vowels in 'conati imponere' meet without an elision, to express the labour and straining of the giants in bearing mountain upon mountain. I appeal to the ear of every reader, if he can pronounce these two words without a pause and stop: the difficulty in the flow of the verse excellently represents the labour of the giants straining to shove Pelion upon Ossa. Dacier remarks that Virgil follows the situation of the mountains, without regarding the magnitude; thus Pelion lies first on the north of Macedonia. Ossa is the second, and the third Olympus; but she prefers Homer's method as most rational.

And near them walk'd, with solemn pace and slow,
 Sad Ariadne, partner of their woe;
 The royal Minos Ariadne bred,
 She Theseus lov'd; from Crete with Theseus fled; 400
 Swift to the Dian isle the hero flies,
 And tow'rd's his Athens bears the lovely prize;
 There Bacchus with fierce rage Diana fires,
 The goddess aims her shaft, the nymph expires.

V. 402. *And tow'rd's his Athens bears the lovely prize.*] Homer justifies Theseus from any crime with relation to Ariadne, he is guilty of no infidelity as succeeding poets affirm; she died suddenly in Dia, or Naxos (an island lying between Thera and Crete); Diana slew her at the instigation of Bacchus, who accused her to that goddess, for profaning her temple by too free an intercourse with Theseus; this Homer calls *μαρτυρή Διονύσου*. Climene was a daughter of Mynias, Mæra of Proetus and Antæa, who having made a vow to Diana of perpetual virginity, broke it; and therefore fell by that goddess. Phædra was wife to Theseus, and fell in love with her son Hippolytus. Euphyle was the daughter of Talæus and Lysimache, wife of the prophet Amphiaraus; who being bribed with a collar of gold by Polynices, obliged her husband to go to the war of Thebes, though she knew he was decreed to fall before that city: she was slain by her son Alcæon. EUSTATHIUS.

Ulysses when he concludes, says it is time to repose

'Here in the court, or yonder on the waves.'

To understand this the reader must remember, that in the beginning of the eighth book all things were prepared for his immediate voyage, or as it is there expressed,

'— — Ev'n now the gales

Call thee aboard, and stretch the swelling sails.'

So that he desires to repose in the ship, that he may begin his voyage early in the morning.

There Clymenè, and Mera I behold, 405
 There Eriphylè weeps, who loosely sold
 Her lord, her honour, for the lust of gold.
 But should I all recount, the night would fail,
 Unequal to the melancholy tale:
 And all-composing rest my nature craves, 410
 Here in the court, or yonder on the waves;
 In you I trust, and in the heav'nly pow'rs,
 To land Ulysses on his native shores.

He ceas'd: but left so charming on their ear
 His voice, that list'ning still they seem'd to hear. 415
 Till rising up, Aretè silence broke,
 Stretch'd out her snowy hand, and thus she spoke:

V. 414. *He ceas'd: but left so charming on their ear*
His voice — —]

I cannot tell whether this pause, or break in the narration of Ulysses, has a good effect or not; whether it gives a relief to the reader, or is an unexpected disappointment of the pursuit of the story? But certainly what is inserted during this short interruption, is particularly well chosen; it unites the episode with the main action, and shews how it contributes to the end of the *Odyssey*, in influencing the Phæacians not only to restore Ulysses, but restore him with wealth and honour, which is the aim of the whole poem.

V. 416. — — *Aretè silence broke.*] Eustathius observes, that the two motives which the queen uses to move the Phæacians to liberality, is the relation Ulysses has to her, as her peculiar guest (for Nausicaa first recommended him to the queen's protection), and their own wealth (for so he renders *εκαστῷ δ' ἐμμορε τιμῆς*, and Dacier follows his interpretation). I have adventured to translate it differently, in this sense: 'It is true, he is my peculiar guest, but you all share in the honour he does us, and therefore it is equitable to join in his assistance;' then she closes her speech with reminding them of their abilities, which in the other sense would be tautology.

What wond'rous man heav'n sends us in our guest!
Through all his woes the hero shines confest;
His comely port, his ample frame express 420
A manly air, majestic in distress.
He, as my guest, is my peculiar care,
You share the pleasure,—then in bounty share;
To worth in misery, a rev'rence pay,
And with a gen'rous hand reward his stay; 425
For since kind heav'n with wealth our realm has bless'd,
Give it to heav'n, by aiding the distress'd.

Then sage Echencus, whose grave, rev'rend brow
The hand of time had silver'd o'er with snow,
Mature in wisdom rose: Your words, he cries, 430
Demand obedience, for your words are wise.
But let our king direct the glorious way
To gen'rous acts; our part is to obey.

While life informs these limbs, (the king reply'd)
Well to deserve, be all my cares employ'd: 435

V. 425. — — *With a gen'rous hand reward his stay.*] This I am persuaded is the true meaning of the passage; Ulysses had shewed a desire immediately to go aboard, and the queen draws an argument from this to induce the Phæacians to a greater contribution, and Ulysses to a longer stay; she persuades them to take time to prepare their presents, which must occasion the stay of Ulysses till they are prepared. They might otherwise (observes Dacier) have pretended to comply with the impatience of Ulysses, and immediately dismissed him with a small gratuity, under the pretext of not having time to prepare a greater. It must be confessed, to the reproach of human nature, that this is but too just a picture of it: self-interest makes the great very ready to gratify their petitioners with a dismissal, or to comply with them to their disadvantage.

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But here this night the royal guest detain,
 Till the sun flames along the ethereal plain:
 Be it my task to send with ample stores
 The stranger from our hospitable shores:
 Tread you my steps! 'Tis mine to lead the race, 440
 The first in glory, as the first in place.

To whom the prince: This night with joy I stay,
 O monarch great in virtue as in sway!
 If thou the circling year my stay controul,
 To raise a bounty noble as thy soul; 445
 The circling year I wait, with ampler stores
 And fitter pomp to hail my native shores:

V. 444. *If thou the circling year, &c.*] This speech of Ulysses has been condemned by the critics, as avaricious: and therefore Eustathius judges it to be spoken artfully and complementally; Didymus, with a well-bred urbanity, or *χαριτωδῶς*: I see nothing mean in it; what Ulysses speaks proceeds from the gratitude of his soul; the heart of a brave man is apt to overflow while it acknowledges an obligation. Spondanus imagines that Ulysses may possibly speak jocosely, and asks if it is probable that he could be induced to stay from his country out of a mean consideration of a few presents, who had already preferred it to immortality? But in truth, Ulysses never behaves with levity; and it would give us an ill idea of that hero, should he return the united kindness of the peers of Phæacia with scorn and derision: besides, Ulysses values these presents no otherwise than as they may contribute to his re-establishment in his country; for he directly says,

‘So by my realms due homage should be paid,
 A wealthy prince is loyally obey’d.’

This is an evidence, that the words of Ulysses flow not from so base a fountain as avarice, but that all his thoughts and actions center upon his country.

Then by my realms due homage would be paid;
For wealthy kings are loyally obey'd!

O king! for such thou art, and sure thy blood 450
Through veins (he cry'd) of royal fathers flow'd;
Unlike those vagrants who on falsehood live,
Skill'd in smooth tales, and artful to deceive;
Thy better soul abhors the liar's part,
Wise is thy voice, and noble is thy heart. 455
Thy words like music ev'ry breast controul,
Steal through the ear, and win upon the soul;

V. 454. *Thy better soul abhors the liar's part,
Wise is thy voice —*]

This is an instance of the judgment of Flouet in sustaining his characters. The Phæaciens were at first described as a credulous people, and he gives us here an instance of their credulity, for they swallow all these fables as so many realities. The verse in the original is remarkable.

Σοι δ' ἐπὶ μὲν μορφήν ἐπέων ἐπὶ δὲ φρενὲς εὐθλῆσαι.

Which Eustathius thinks was used by Alcinoüs, to tell Ulysses that his fables were so well laid together as to have the appearance of truth; Dacier follows him, and (as usual) delivers his opinion as her own sentiment. But this cannot be Homer's intention, for it supposes Alcinoüs to look upon those relations as fables, contrary to the universal character of their ignorant credulity; I therefore am persuaded that *μορφήν ἐπέων* signifies the pleasantness or beauty of his relation, and *φρενὲς εὐθλῆσαι* the integrity of his heart in opposition to the character of a liar, or perhaps his wisdom in general: and this excellently agrees with his resembling him to a musician (who always was a poet in those ages, and sung the exploits of heroes, &c. to the lyre). In this view the sweetness of the music represents the agreeableness of the narration, and the subject of the musician's song the story of his adventures.

Soft, as some song divine, thy story flows,
Nor better could the muse record thy woes.

But say, upon the dark and dismal coast, 460
Saw'st thou the worthies of the Grecian host?
The godlike leaders who in battle slain,
Fell before Troy, and nobly press'd the plain?
And lo! a length of night behind remains,
The ev'ning stars still mount th' ethereal plains. 465
Thy tale with raptures I could hear thee tell,
Thy woes on earth, the wond'rous scenes in hell,
Till in the vault of heav'n the stars decay,
And the sky reddens with the rising day.

O worthy of the pow'r the gods assign'd, 470
(Ulysses thus replies) a king in mind!
Since yet the early hour of night allows
Time for discourse, and time for soft repose,
If scenes of misery can entertain,
Woes I unfold, of woes a dismal train. 475
Prepare to hear of murder and of blood;
Of godlike heroes who uninjur'd stood
Amidst a war of spears in foreign lands,
Yet bled at home, and bled by female hands.

Now summon'd Proserpine to hell's black hall 480
The heroine shades; they vanish'd at her call.

When lo! advanc'd the forms of heroes slain
By stern Ægysthus, a majestic train,
And high above the rest, Atrides press'd the plain.

He quaff'd the gore: and straight his soldier knew,
 And from his eyes pour'd down the tender dew; 486
 His arms he stretch'd; his arms the touch deceive,
 Nor in the fond embrace, embraces give:
 His substance vanish'd, and his strength decay'd,
 Now all Atrides is an empty shade. 490

Mov'd at the sight, I for a space resign'd
 To soft affliction all my manly mind;
 At last with tears—O what relentless doom,
 Imperial phantom, bow'd thee to the tomb?
 Say while the sea, and while the tempest raves, 495
 Has fate oppress'd thee in the roaring waves,
 Or nobly seiz'd thee in the dire alarms
 Of war and slaughter, and the clash of arms?

The ghost returns: O chief of humankind
 For active courage and a patient mind; 500
 Nor while the sea, nor while the tempest raves,
 Has fate oppress'd me on the roaring waves!
 Nor nobly seiz'd me in the dire alarms
 Of war and slaughter, and the clash of arms.
 Stabb'd by a murd'rous hand Atrides dy'd, 505
 A foul adult'rer, and a faithless bride;
 Ev'n in my mirth and at the friendly feast,
 O'er the full bowl, the traitor stabb'd his guest;
 Thus by the gory arm of slaughter falls
 The stately ox, and bleeds within the stalls. 510
 But not with me the direful murder ends,
 These, these expir'd! their crime, they were my friends:

Thick as the boars, which some luxurious lord
Kills for the feast, to crown the nuptial board.
When war has thunder'd with its loudest storms, 515
Death thou hast seen in all her ghastly forms;
In duel met her, on the listed ground,
When hand to hand they wound return for wound;
But never have thy eyes astonish'd view'd
So vile a deed, so dire a scene of blood. 520
Ev'n in the flow of joy, when now the bowl
Glow's in our veins, and opens ev'ry soul,
We groan, we faint; with blood the dome is dy'd,
And o'er the pavement floats the dreadful tide—
Her breast all gore, with lamentable cries, 525
The bleeding innocent Cassandra dies!
Then though pale death froze cold in ev'ry vein,
My sword I strive to wield, but strive in vain;
Nor did my trait'ress wife these eye-lids close,
Or decently in death my limbs compose. 530
O woman, woman, when to ill thy mind
Is bent, all hell contains no fouler fiend:
And such was mine! who basely plung'd her sword
Through the fond bosom where she reign'd ador'd!
Alas! I hop'd, the toils of war o'ercome, 535
To meet soft quiet and repose at home;
Delusive hope! O wife, thy deeds disgrace
The perjur'd sex, and blacken all the race;
And should posterity one virtuous find,
Name Clytemnestra, they will curse the kind. 540

O injur'd shade, I cry'd, what mighty woes
To thy imperial' race³ from woman rose!

V. 539. *And should posterity^{*} one virtue find,
Name Clytemnestra, they will curse the kind.*

There cannot be a greater satire upon the fair sex than this whole conference between Ulysses and Agamemnon. Terence has fallen into the sentiment with Homer.

'Ædēpol, nā nos æquē sumus omnes invisæ viris
Propter paucas, quæ omnes faciunt dignæ ut videamur malo.'

But how is this to be reconciled to justice, and why should the innocent suffer for the crimes of the guilty? We are to take notice, that Agamemnon speaks with anger, an undistinguishing passion, and his words flow from resentment, not reason; it must be confessed that Agamemnon had received great provocation, his wife had dishonoured his bed, and taken his life away; it is therefore no wonder if he flies out into a vehemence of language; a poet is obliged to follow nature, and give a fierceness to the features, when he paints a person in such emotions, and add a violence to his colours.

It has been objected that Homer, and even Virgil, were enemies to the fairest part of the creation; that there is scarce a good character of a woman in either of the poets: but Andromache in the Iliad, and Penelope, Arete, and Nausicaa in the Odyssey, are instances to the contrary. I must own I am a little at a loss to vindicate Ulysses in this place; he is speaking before Arete and Nausicaa, a queen and her daughter; and entertains them with a satire upon their own sex, which may appear unpolite, and a want of decency; and be applied by Alcinoüs as a caution to beware of his spouse, and not to trust her in matters of importance with his secrets; for this is the moral that is naturally drawn from the fable. Madame Dacier gives up the cause, and allows the advice of not trusting women to be good; it comes from her indeed a little unwillingly, with 'I will not say but the counsel may be right.' I for my part will allow Ulysses to be in an hundred faults, rather than lay such an imputation upon the ladies; Ulysses ought to be considered as having suffered

By woman here thou tread'st this mournful strand,
And Greece by woman lies a desert land.

Warn'd by my ills beware, the Shade replies,
Nor trust the sex that is so rarely wise; 546
When earnest to explore thy secret breast,
Unfold some trifle, but conceal the rest.
But in thy consort cease to fear a foe,
For thee she feels sincerity of woe: 550
When Troy first bled beneath the Grecian arms
She shone unrivall'd with a blaze of charms,
Thy infant son her fragrant bosom prest,
Hung at her knee, or wanton'd at her breast;
But now the years a num'rous train have ran; 555
The blooming boy is ripen'd into man;
Thy eyes shall see him burn with noble fire,
The sire shall bless his son, the son his sire:
But my Orestes never met these eyes,
Without one look the murder'd father dies; 560

twenty years calamities for that sex in the cause of Helen, and this possibly may give a little acrimony to his language. He puts it indeed in the mouth of Agamemnon; but the objection returns, why does he choose to relate such a story before a queen and her daughter? In short, I think they ought to have torn him to pieces, as the ladies of Thrace served Orpheus.

V. 541. — — *What mighty woes
To thy imperial race from woman rose!*

Ulysses here means Aëropè the wife of Atreus, and mother of Agamemnon, who being corrupted by Thyestes, involved the whole family in the utmost calamities. EUSTATHIUS.

Then from a wretched friend this wisdom learn,
 Ev'n to thy queen disguis'd, unknown, return;
 For since of womankind so few are just,
 Think all are false, nor ev'n the faithful trust.

But say, resides my son in royal port, 565
 In rich Orchomenos, or Sparta's court?
 Or say in Pyle? for yet he views the light,
 Nor glides a phantom through the realms of night.

Then I: Thy suit is vain, nor can I say
 If yet he breathes in realms of cheerful day; 570
 Or pale or wan beholds these nether skies?
 Truth I revere: for wisdom never lies.

Thus in a tide of tears our sorrows flow,
 And add new horror to the realms of woe;
 Till side by side along the dreary coast 575
 Advanc'd Achilles' and Patroclus' ghost,

V. 565. *But say, resides my son —*] Eustathius gives us the reason why Agamemnon mentions Pyle, Sparta, and Orchomenos, as places where Orestes might make his residence: Sparta was under the dominion of his brother Menelaus; Pyle, of his old friend and faithful counsellor Nestor; and Orchomenos was a city of great strength, and therefore of great security. We may evidently gather from this passage what notion the ancients had concerning a future state: namely, that persons after death were entirely strangers to the affairs of this world; for Orestes his son had slain his murderer Ægythus, and reigned in peaceable possession of his dominions; when Agamemnon is ignorant of the whole transaction, and desires Ulysses to give him information.

V. 576. — — *Achilles' and Patroclus' ghost.*] Homer lets no opportunity pass of celebrating his hero Achilles; he cannot fail of awakening our attention to hear the story of this great man after

A friendly pair! near these the * Pilyan stray'd,
 And tow'ring Ajax, an illustrious shade!
 War was his joy, and pleas'd with loud alarms,
 None but Pelides brighter shone in arms. 580

Through the thick gloom his friend Achilles knew,
 And as he speaks the tears descend in dew.

Com'st thou alive to view the Stygian bounds,*
 Where the wan spectres walk eternal rounds;
 Nor fear'st the dark and dismal waste to tread, 585
 Throng'd with pale ghosts, familiar with the dead?

To whom with sighs: I pass these dreadful gates
 To seek the Theban, and consult the Fates:
 For still distress'd I rove from coast to coast,
 Lost to my friends, and to my country lost. 590
 But sure the eye of time beholds no name
 So blest as thine in all the rolls of fame;
 Alive we hail'd thee with our guardian gods,
 And, dead thou rul'st a king in these abodes.

death, of whom alive we saw such wonders. Besides, the poet pays an honour to true friendship: the person whom Achilles best loved on earth, is his chief companion in the other world: a very strong argument to cultivate friendship with sincerity. Achilles here literally fulfils what he promised in the Iliad.

' If in the melancholy shades below
 The flames of friends, and lovers cease to glow,
 Yet mine shall sacred last; mine undecay'd
 Burn on through death, and animate my shade.'

Antilochus.

Talk not of ruling in this dol'rous gloom, 595
 Nor think vain words (he cry'd) can ease my doom.
 Rather I choose laboriously to bear
 A weight of woes, and breathe the vital air,
 A slave to some poor hind that toils for bread; 599
 Than reign the scepter'd monarch of the dead,

V. 599. *A slave to some poor hind that toils for bread;
 Than reign the scepter'd monarch of the dead.]*

Nothing sure can give us a more disadvantageous image of a future state, than this speech which Homer puts into the mouth of so great a hero as Achilles. If the poet intended to shew the vanity of that destructive glory which is purchased by the sword, and read a lecture to all the disturbers of mankind, whom we absurdly honour as heroes, it must be allowed he has done it effectually: if this was not his design, the remark of Plato 3 Repub. is not without a foundation; he there proscribes this whole passage as dangerous to morals, and blames the poet for making Achilles say he prefers misery and servitude to all the honours which the dead are capable of enjoying. For what, says he, can make death more terrible to young persons? And will it not dispose them to suffer all calamities to avoid it, deter them from exposing themselves to danger, even in defence of their country, and teach them to be cowards and slaves? Lucian was of Plato's opinion, for he mentions this passage, and ridicules it in his Dialogues. Dacier gives a different turn to it, and endeavours to shew that there is no danger of such consequences as Plato draws from it: 'Achilles,' adds she, 'speaks directly contrary to his declared sentiments and actions, and therefore there is no danger he should persuade mankind to prefer servitude before death, when he himself died, rather than not revenge his friend Patroclus. Such words which are contradicted both by the sentiments and actions of him that speaks, have on the contrary a very good effect.' But I cannot come into her opinion; I will let Achilles answer for himself out of Lucian; 'In the other world I was ignorant,' says he, 'of the state of the dead, I had not experienced the difference between the two states, when I preferred a

But say, if in my steps my son proceeds,
 And emulates his godlike father's deeds?
 If at the clash of arms, and shout of foes,
 Swells his bold heart, his bosom nobly glows?
 Say if my sire, the rev'rend Peleus, reigns 605
 Great in his Pthia, and his throne maintains;
 Or weak and old, my youthful arm demands,
 To fix the sceptre steadfast in his hands?
 O might the lamp of life rekindled burn,
 And death release me from the silent urn! 610
 This arm that thunder'd o'er the Phrygian plain,
 And swell'd the ground with mountains of the slain,
 Should vindicate my injur'd father's fame,
 Crush the proud rebel, and assert his claim.
 Illustrious shade (I cry'd), of Peleus' fates 615
 No circumstance the voice of fame relates:
 But hear with pleas'd attention the renown,
 The wars and wisdom of thy gallant son:
 With me from Scyros to the field of fame
 Radiant in arms the blooming hero came. 620

little empty glory to life.' This is an answer to what Dacier advances, for Achilles speaks with experience, and yet prefers misery and life before glory and death. I know not how to vindicate Homer, unless it be a vindication to say, that he wrote according to the opinions that anciently prevailed in the world; or that, like Hercules, while the vehicle of Achilles is in this state of horror, his soul may be in heaven; especially since he received divine honours after death, as well as Hercules. Tull. Nat. Deor. 3. 'Astypalæa Achillem sanctissimè colit, qui si Deus est, et Orpheus,' &c.

When Greece assembled all her hundred states
To ripen counsels, and decide debates;
Heav'n's! how he charm'd us with a flow of sense,
And won the heart with manly eloquence!
He first was seen of all the peers to rise, 625
The third in wisdom, where they all were wise;
But when to try the fortune of the day,
Host mov'd tow'rd host in terrible array,
Before the van, impatient for the fight,
With martial port he strode, and stern delight; 630
Heaps strew'd on heaps beneath his falchion groan'd,
And monuments of dead deform'd the ground.

V. 626. *The third in wisdom* — —] I have not ventured to render the Greek literally; Ulysses says that Neoptolemus was so wise, that only he himself and Nestor were wiser; a truth that would appear more graceful, if spoken by any other person than Ulysses. But perhaps the poet puts these words into his mouth, only because he is speaking to the Phæacians, who loved themselves to boast, and were full of vain-glory; and consequently they could not think self-praise a crime in Ulysses; on the contrary, it could not fail of having a very good effect, as it sets him off as a person of consummate wisdom.

The poet excellently sustains the character of Achilles in this interview: in the *Iliad* he is described a dutiful son, and always expressing a tender affection for his father Peleus; in the *Odyssey* he is drawn in the same soft colours: in the *Iliad* he is represented as a man of a strong resentment; in the *Odyssey*, he first imagines that his father suffers, and upon this imagination he immediately takes fire, and flies into threats and fury.

Dictys, lib. vi. relates, that Peleus was expelled from his kingdom by Acastus, but that Pyrrhus the son of Achilles afterwards revenged the injury.

The time would fail should I in order tell
 What foes were vanquish'd, and what numbers fell:
 How, lost through love, Eurypylos was slain, 635
 And round him bled his bold Cetaean train.
 To Troy no hero came of nobler line,
 Or if of nobler, Memnon, it was thine.

V. 635. *How, lost through love, Eurypylos was slain.*] It must be owned that this passage is very intricate: Strabo himself complains of its obscurity: the poet (says that author) rather proposes an enigma, than a clear history: for who are these Cetæans, and what are these 'presents of women?' And adds, that the grammarians darken, instead of clearing the obscurity. But it is no difficulty to solve these objections from Eustathius.

It is evident from Strabo himself, that Eurypylos reigned near the river Caïcus, over the Mysians, and Pliny confines it to Teuthrany; this agrees with what Ovid writes, *Metam. ii.*

' — — Teuthrantæusque Caïcus.'

And Virgil shews us that Caïcus was a river of Mysia. *Georg. iv.*

' Saxosumque sonans Hypanis, Mysusque Caïcus.'

But what relation has Caïcus to the Cetæans? Hesychius informs us, that they are a people of Mysia, so called from the river Cetium, which runs through their country; Κητριοι, γειῶν Μυσων, ἀπὸ τοῦ παρρηϊοῦ ποταμοῦ Κητριοῦ. This river discharges itself into the Caïcus, and consequently the Cetæans were Mysians, over whom Eurypylos reigned. It would be endless to transcribe the different opinions of writers cited by Eustathius; some read the verse thus:

Κητριοι κλεινοῖς γυναικῶν, εἰνικά δαίρων.

Then the meaning will be, 'How they fell far from their wives, for the sake of a reward;' that is, for their pay from Hector, who, as it appears from the *Iliad*, taxed the Trojans to pay the auxiliaries, one of whom was Eurypylos. Others think the word signifies, 'Great of

When Ilion in the horse receiv'd her doom,
And unseen armies ambush'd in its womb; 640

stature,' and in this sense we find it used in the first line of the fourth Odyssey.

— — Λακεδαιμονα Κήϊωσσαν.

But I have followed the first opinion, as appearing most probable and natural.

But how are we to explain the second objection, or *γυναικων εινεκα δωρων*? Some (says Eustathius) understand the expression as applied to Neoptolemus, and not Eurypylus; namely, Eurypylus and his soldiers fell by means of the 'gifts of women;' that is, Neoptolemus was led to the war by the promise of having Hermione in marriage, the daughter of Menelaus, which promise occasioned the death of Eurypylus, by bringing Neoptolemus to the siege of Troy. Others understand it to be spoken of a golden vine, sent by Priam to his sister Astyoche the mother of Eurypylus, to induce her to persuade her son to undertake this expedition to Troy, where he was slain by the son of Achilles; this vine was said to be given to Tros the father of Priam by Jupiter, as a recompense for his carrying away his son Ganymede to be his cup-bearer; but this is too much a fable to be followed. Others more probably assert, that Priam had promised one of his daughters to Eurypylus, to engage his assistance in the war; and this agrees very well with Homer's manner of writing in many places of the Iliad; and there is a great resemblance between Eurypylus in the Odyssey and Othryoneus in the Iliad, lib. xiii. 461.

'Cassandra's love he sought, with boasts of pow'r,
And promis'd conquest was the proffer'd dow'r.'

Spondanus cites a passage from Dictys, lib. iv. that very well explains these difficulties: 'Inter quæ tam læta (nimirum mortem Achillis, &c.) Priamo supervenit nuncius Eurypylum Telephi filium ex Mysia adventare, quem rex multis antea illectum præmiis, ad postremum oblatione Cassandræ confirmaverat, addiderat etiam auream vitem, et ob id per populos memorabilem.'

Greece gave her latent warriors to my care,
'Twas mine on Troy to pour th' imprison'd war:
Then when the boldest bosom beat with fear,
When the stern eyes of heroes dropp'd a tear;
Fierce in his look his ardent valour glow'd, 645
Flush'd in his cheek, or sally'd in his blood;
Indignant in the dark recess he stands,
Pants for the battle, and the war demands;
His voice breath'd death, and with a martial air 649
He grasp'd his sword, and shook his glitt'ring spear.
And when the gods our arms with conquest crown'd,
When Troy's proud bulwarks smok'd upon the ground,
Greece to reward her soldier's gallant toils
Heap'd high his navy with unnumber'd spoils.

Thus great in glory from the din of war 655
Safe he return'd, without one hostile scar;
Though spears in iron tempests rain'd around,
Yet innocent they play'd, and guiltless of a wound.

While yet I spoke, the shade with transport glow'd,
Rose in his majesty, and nobler trod; 660
With haughty stalk he sought the distant glades
Of warrior kings, and join'd th' illustrious shades.

Now without number ghost by ghost arose,
All wailing with unutterable woes.
Alone, apart, in discontented mood 665
A gloomy shade, the sullen Ajax stood;
For ever sad with proud disdain he pin'd,
And the lost arms for ever stung his mind;

Though to the contest Thetis gave the laws,
And Pallas, by the Trojans, judg'd the cause. 670
O why was I victorious in the strife;
O dear-bought honour with so brave a life!

V. 669. *Though to the contest Thetis gave the laws,
And Pallas, by the Trojans, judg'd the cause.*]

There are two particulars which want explication in these verses: how did Thetis give the law to the contest between Ajax and Ulysses? and how could the Trojans be made judges to determine between two Grecian heroes? Thetis, the mother of Achilles, was a goddess, and out of honour to her, the chiefs of the Grecian army proposed the arms of her son as a reward to the most worthy; and poetry, to give a magnificence to the story, introduces the goddess as acting in person what is done upon her account. Thetis may properly be said to be desirous that the memory of her son should be honoured; and Homer, to express this desire poetically, tells us it was the act of that goddess, to propose the arms of Achilles as a reward to the most worthy of the Grecian heroes.

The second difficulty is fully explained by Eustathius; Agamemnon finding it an invidious affair to give the preference to any one of the Grecian heroes, and being willing to avoid the reproach of partiality, commanded the Trojan prisoners to be brought before the whole army, and asked from which of the two heroes, Ajax or Ulysses, they had received the greater detriment; they immediately replied, from Ulysses; thus the Trojans adjudged the cause. The poet adds, that this was done by Minerva; that is, the affair was conducted with wisdom, the result of which in poetry is usually ascribed to the goddess of it; and no doubt but the goddess of wisdom must always prefer wisdom to mere valour, or an Ulysses to an Ajax. This decision is related in a very different manner by other poets; in particular, by Ovid in his *Metamorphosis*; but Lucian in his *Dialogues* agrees with Homer in every point very circumstantially; and consequently, with some obscurity, but what I have here said fully explains that dialogue of Lucian, as well as this passage of Homer.

With him the strength of war, the soldiers pride,
 Our second hope to great Achilles dy'd!
 Touch'd at the sight from tears I scarce refrain, 675
 And tender sorrow thrills in ev'ry vein;
 Pensive and sad I stand, at length accosted
 With accents mild th' inexorable ghost.

Still burns thy rage? and can brave souls resent
 Ev'n after death? Relent, great shade, relent! 680
 Perish those arms which by the gods decree
 Accurs'd our army with the loss of thee!
 With thee we fell; Greece wept thy hapless fates;
 And shook astonish'd through her hundred states;
 Not more, when great Achilles press'd the ground,
 And breath'd his manly spirit through the wound.
 O deem thy fall not ow'd to man's decree,
 Jove hated Greece, and punish'd Greece in thee!
 Turn then, oh peaceful turn, thy wrath controul,
 And calm the raging tempest of thy soul. 690

While yet I speak, the shade disdains to stay,
 In silence turns, and sullen stalks away.

V. 691. — — *The shade disdains to stay,*

In silence turns, and sullen stalks away.]

This silence of Ajax was very much admired by the ancients, and Longinus proposes it as an instance of the true sublimity of thought, which springs from an elevation of soul, and not from the diction; for a man may be truly sublime without speaking a word: thus in the silence of Ajax there is something more noble, than in any thing he could possibly have spoken. Monsieur Rapin agrees with Longinus: the stubborn untractable Ajax (says that author) could not have made

Touch'd at his sour retreat, through deepest night,
 Through hell's black bounds I had pursu'd his flight,
 And forc'd the stubborn spectre to reply; 695
 But wond'rous visions drew my curious eye.
 High on a throne tremendous to behold,
 Stern Minos waves a mace of burnish'd gold;
 Around ten thousand thousand spectres stand
 Through the wide dome of Dis, a trembling band.
 Still as they plead, the fatal lots he rolls, 701
 Absolves the just, and dooms the guilty souls.

a better return to the compliments full of submission which were paid him by Ulysses, than by a disdainful and contemptuous silence: Ajax has more the air of grandeur and majesty, when he says nothing, than when the poet makes him speak. Virgil was sensible of the beauty of it, and paints Dido in the attitude of Ajax. Fraguier infinitely prefers the silence of Dido to that of Ajax; she was a woman disappointed in love, and therefore no wonder if she was greatly passionate, and sunk under the weight of the calamity; but Ajax was a hero, and ought to have freed himself by his courage from such an unworthy degree of resentment. But to me there appears no weight in this objection: we must remember what an hero Ajax is, a sour, stubborn, untractable hero; and upon all occasions given to taciturnity; this is his universal and notorious character through the whole Iliad: the poet therefore adapts his description to it, and he is the same Ajax in the Odyssey as he was in the Iliad. Had this been spoken of any other hero, the criticism had been more just, but in Ajax this stubborn silence is proper and noble.

V. 701. *Still as they plead* — —] The expression in the Greek is remarkable, *ἤμηναι, ἑστᾶσθαι τε*; that is, 'standing and sitting;' this is to be referred to different persons; the *ἑστᾶσθαι* were the *συνδικασταί*, or persons who pleaded the cause of the guilty or innocent before the infernal judges: the *ἤμηναι* were the persons for whom they pleaded, or those who were about to receive judgment. I doubt not

There huge Orion of portentous size,
Swift through the gloom a giant-hunter flies;

but this was a custom observed in the courts of judicature in the days of Homer. EUSTATHIUS.

V. 703. — — *Orion of portentous size,
Swift through the gloom a giant hunter flies.*]

The diversion of this infernal hunter may seem extraordinary in pursuing the shades of beasts; but it was the opinion of the ancients, that the same passions to which men were subject on earth continued with them in the other world; and their shades were liable to be affected in the same manner as their bodies: thus we frequently see them shedding tears, and Sisyphus sweats in rolling the stone up the mountain. Virgil,

' Stant terra defixæ hastæ, passimque soluti
Per campos pascuntur equi, quæ cura nitentes
Pascere equos, eadem sequitur tellure repostos.'

And again,

' — — Curæ non ipsâ in morte relinquunt.'

I cannot but be of opinion that Milton has far surpassed both the Greek and the Roman poet, in the description of the employment of the fallen angels in hell, as the ideas are more noble and suitable to the characters he describes.

' Part on the plain, or in the air sublime
Upon the wing, or in swift race contend,
As at th' Olympian games or Pythian fields:
Part curb the fiery steeds, or shun the goal
With rapid wheels, or fronted brigades form.
Others with vast Typhæan rage more fell
Rend up both rocks, and hills, and ride the air
In whirlwind: hell scarce holds the wild uproar.
— — Others more mild
Retreated in a silent valley, sing

A pond'rous mace of brass with direful sway 705
 Aloft he whirls, to crush the savage prey;
 Stern beasts in trains that by his truncheon fell,
 Now grisly forms, shoot o'er the lawns of hell.

There Tityus large and long, in fetters bound,
 O'erspreads nine acres of infernal ground; 710

With notes angelical to many an harp,
 Their own heroic deeds — —
 The song was partial, but the harmony
 Suspended hell, and took with ravishment
 The thronging audience, &c.

V. 709. *There Tityus* — —] It is needless to mention that Virgil has adorned his descent into hell with most of these fables borrowed from Homer; it is equally unnecessary to relate what antiquity says of these fabled persons, and their histories; but the moral of them all is observed by Eustathius, and fully explained by Lucretius, which I will lay together from Mr. Dryden's translation.

' — — The dismal tales that poets tell
 Are verify'd on earth, and not in hell;
 No Tantalus looks with a fearful eye,
 Or dreads th' impending rock to crush him from on high;
 No Tityus, torn by vultures, lies in hell,
 Nor could the lobes of his rank liver swell
 To that prodigious mass, for their eternal meal.
 But he's the Tityus, who, by love oppress'd,
 Or tyrant-passion preying on his breast,
 And ever anxious thoughts, is robb'd of rest.
 The Sisyphus is he, whom noise and strife
 Seduce from all the soft retreats of life,
 To vex the government, disturb the laws:
 Drunk with the fumes of popular applause,
 He courts the giddy crowd to make him great,
 And sweats and toils in vain, to mount the sov'reign seat.

Two rav'nous vultures, furious for their food,
 Scream o'er the liend, and riot in his blood,
 Incessant gore the liver in his breast,
 Th' immortal liver grows, and gives th' immortal feast.
 For as o'er Panopé's enamell'd plains 715
 Latona journey'd to the Pythian fanes,
 With haughty love th' audacious monster strove
 To force the goddess, and to rival Jove.

There Tantalus along the Stygian bounds
 Pours out deep groans; (with groans all hell resounds)

For still to aim at pow'r, and still to fail,
 Ever to strive, and never to prevail,
 What is it but in reason's true account,
 To heave the stone against the rising mount?

I will only add the reason from Eustathius, why Tityus was fabled to be the son of the earth; it was from his being immersed in worldly cares, and from his centering all his affections upon the earth, as if he had sprung from it; this is alluded to by the expression *κειμενον εν δαμηδω*. Spondanus gives us another reason; Elara being pregnant by Jupiter, he, to avoid the jealousy of Juno, concealed her in a cavern of the earth, where Tityus being born, is fabled to be the son of the earth: he adds, that the fiction of his covering nine acres, arose from that space of ground which was enclosed for his place of burial. Perhaps the story of Tantalus was invented solely to paint the nature of a covetous person, who starves amidst plenty, like Tantalus in the midst of water. Thus Horace applies it, Satire i. v. 70.

'Tantalus a labris sitiens fugientia captat
 Flumina. Quid rides? mutato nomine de te
 Fabula narratur, congestis undique saccis
 Indormis inhians, et tanquam parcere sacris
 Cogaris.' —

Book XI. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 557

Ev'n in the circling floods refreshment craves, 721
 And pines with thirst amidst a sea of waves:
 When to the water he his lip applies,
 Back from his lip the treach'rous water flies.
 Above, beneath, around his hapless head, 725
 Trees of all kinds delicious fruitage spread;
 There figs sky-dy'd, a purple hue disclose,
 Green looks the olive, the pomegranate glows,
 There dangling pears exalted scents unfold,
 And yellow apples ripen into gold; 730
 The fruit he strives to seize: but blasts arise,
 Toss it on high, and whirl it to the skies.

I turn'd my eye, and as I turn'd survey'd
 A mournful vision! the Sisyphian shade;
 With many a weary step, and many a groan, 735
 Up the high hill he heaves a huge round stone;

V. 736. *Up the high hill he heaves a huge round stone.*] This is a very remarkable instance of the beauty of Homer's versification; it is taken notice of by Eustathius, but copiously explained by Dionysius Halicarnassus, in his treatise of placing of words.

Λααν βασταζοντα πελωριον αμφοτερησιν,
 Ητοι ο μιν σκηρτισμενον χερσιν τε ποσιν τε,
 Λααν ανω ωθεσκα — —

Here (says Dionysius) we see in the choice and disposition of the words the fact which they describe; the weight of the stone, and the striving to heave it up the mountain: to effect this, Homer clogs the verse with spondees or long syllables, and leaves the vowels open, as in *λααν*, and in *ανω ωθεσκα*, which two words it is impossible to pronounce without hesitation and difficulty; the very words and syllables are heavy, and, as it were, make resistance in the pronunciation, to

The huge round stone, resulting with a bound,
 Thunders impetuous down, and smokes along the ground.
 Again the restless orb his toil renews,
 Dust mounts in clouds, and sweat descends in dews.

Now I the strength of Hercules beheld, 741
 A tow'ring spectre of gigantic mould,
 A shadowy form! for high in heav'n's abodes
 Himself resides, a god among the gods;

express the heaviness of the stone, and the difficulty with which it is forced up the mountain. To give the English reader a faint image of the beauty of the original in the translation, I have loaded the verse with monosyllables, and these almost all begin with aspirates:

‘Up the high hill he heaves a huge round stone.’

Homer is no less happy in describing the rushing down of the stone from the top of the mountain.

Αυτίς ἐπεὶ αὖ παθὼν δὲ κυλινδρεῖο λααὸς ἀναιδής.

Is it not evident (continues Dionysius) that the swiftness of the verse imitates the celerity of the stone in its descent; nay, that the verse runs with the greater rapidity? What is the cause of this? It is because there is not one monosyllable in the line, and but two dissyllables, ten of the syllables are short, and not one spondee in it, except one that could not be avoided at the conclusion of it; there is no hiatus or gap between word and word, no vowels left open to retard the celerity of it: the whole seems to be but one word, the syllables melt into one another, and flow away with the utmost rapidity in a torrent of dactyls. I was too sensible of the beauty of this not to endeavour to imitate it, though unsuccessfully: I have therefore thrown it into the swiftness of an Alexandrine, to make it of a more proportionable number of syllables with the Greek.

I refer the reader for a fuller explication of these verses to Dionysius.

V. 743. — — *Hercules, a shadowy form.*] This is the passage

There in the bright assemblies of the skies, 745
 He nectar quaffs, and Hebe crowns his joys.
 Here hov'ring ghosts, like fowl, his shade surround,
 And clang their pinions with terrific sound;
 Gloomy as night he stands, in act to throw
 Th' aerial arrow from the twanging bow. 750
 Around his breast a wond'rous zone is roll'd,
 Where woodland monsters grin in fretted gold;
 There sullen lions sternly seem to roar,
 The bear to growl, to foam the tusky boar;
 There war and havoc and destruction stood, 755
 And vengeful murder red with human blood.
 Thus terribly adorn'd the figures shine,
 Inimitably wrought with skill divine.

formerly referred to in these annotations, to prove that Hercules was in heaven, while his shade was in the infernal regions; a full evidence of the partition of the human composition into three parts: the body is buried in the earth; the image, or *ειδωλον*, descends into the regions of the departed; and the soul, or the divine part of man, is received into heaven: thus the body of Hercules was consumed in the flames, his image is in hell, and his soul in heaven. There is a beautiful moral couched in the fable of his being married to Hebe, or youth, after death: to imply, that a perpetual youth, or a reputation which never grows old, is the reward of those heroes who, like Hercules, employ their courage for the good of humankind.

V. 758. *Inimitably wrought with skill divine.*] This verse is not without obscurity; Eustathius gives us several interpretations of it.

Μη, τεχνησαμεν, μη δ' ἄλλο τι τεχνησαίῃο.

The negative *μη*, by being repeated, seems to be redundant; and this in a great measure occasions the difficulty: but in the Greek language two negatives more strongly deny; this being premised, we may read

The mighty ghost advanc'd with awful look,
And turning his grim visage, sternly spoke. 760

O exercis'd in grief! by arts refin'd!

O taught to bear the wrongs of base mankind!

Such, such was I! still tost from care to care,

While in your world I drew the vital air!

Ev'n I who from the Lord of thunders rose, 765

Bore toils and dangers, and a weight of woes;

To a base monarch still a slave confin'd,

(The hardest bondage to a gen'rous mind!)

the verse as if the former $\mu\eta$ were absent, and then the meaning will be, 'He that made this zone, never made any thing equal to it,' as if we should say, that Phidias, who made the statue of Jupiter, never made any other statue like it; that is, he employed the whole power of his skill upon it. Others understand the verse as an execration: 'Oh never, never may the hand that made it, make any thing again so terrible as this zone:' and this will give some reason for the repetition of the negative particles. Dacier approves of this latter explication, and moralizes upon it: it proceeds (says she) from a tender sentiment of humanity in Ulysses, who wishes that there may never more be occasion for such a design as the artist executed in this belt of Hercules: that there may be no more giants to conquer, no more monsters to tame, nor no more human blood to be shed. I wish that such a pious and well natured explication were to be drawn from the passage! But how is it possible that the artist who made this zone should ever make another, when he had been in his grave some centuries? (for such a distance there was between the days of Hercules and Ulysses;) and consequently it would be impertinent to wish it. I have therefore followed the former interpretation. I will only add, that this belt of Hercules is the reverse of the girdle of Venus: in that there is a collection of every thing that is amiable; in this, a variety of horrors; but both are master-pieces of their kind.

Down to these worlds I trod the dismal way,
 • And dragg'd the three-mouth'd dog to upper day; 770
 Ev'n hell I conquer'd, through the friendly aid
 Of Maia's offspring and the martial maid.

Thus he, nor deign'd for our reply to stay,
 But turning stalk'd with giant-strides away.

Curious to view the kings of ancient days, 775
 • The mighty dead that live in endless praise,
 Resolv'd I stand; and haply had survey'd
 The godlike Theseus, and Perithous' shade;

V. 769. *Down to these worlds I trod the dismal way.*] Nothing can be more artfully inserted than the mention of this descent of Hercules into the regions of the dead: Ulysses shews by it at least that it was a vulgar opinion, and consequently within the degrees of poetical probability; a poet being at liberty to follow common fame: in particular, it could not fail of having a full effect upon his Phæacian auditors, not only as it in some measure sets him upon a level with Hercules, but as it is an example of a like undertaking with this which he has been relating, and therefore a probable method to gain their belief of it. EUSTATHIUS.

V. 777. — — *And haply had survey'd*
The godlike Theseus — —]

Plutarch in his life of Theseus informs us, that this verse has been thought not genuine; but added to the *Odyssey* in honour of the Athenians by Pisistratus.

The poet shews us that he had still a noble fund of invention, and had it in his power to open new scenes of wonder and entertainment; but that this infernal episode might not be too long, he shifts the scene: the invention of the gorgon, which terrifies him from a longer abode in these realms of darkness, gives a probable reason for his immediate return. Eustathius informs us from Athenæus, that Alexander the Midian writes in his *History of Animals*, that there really

But swarms of spectres rose from deepest hell,
 With bloodless visage, and with hideous yell, 780
 They scream, they shriek; sad groans and dismal sounds
 Stun my scar'd ears, and pierce hell's utmost bounds.
 No more my heart the dismal din sustains,
 And my cold blood hangs shiv'ring in my veins;
 Lest gorgon rising from th' infernal lakes, 785
 With horrors arm'd, and curls of hissing snakes,
 Should fix me, stiffen'd at the monstrous sight,
 A stony image, in eternal night!
 Straight from the direful coast to purer air
 I speed my flight, and to my mates repair. 790

was a creature in Lybia, which the Nomades called a gorgon; it resembled a wildram, or as some affirm, a calf; whose breath was of such a poisonous nature, as to kill all that approached it: in the same region the catoblepton is found, a creature like a bull, whose eyes are so fixed in the head as chiefly to look downward; Pliny calls it Catoblepas, lib. viii. cap. 21, which is likewise supposed to kill with its eyes: the gorgon (proceeds Athenæus) has its hair hanging over its eyes down from the forehead, of such thickness that it scarce is able to remove it, to guide itself from danger; but it kills not by its breath, but with emanations darted from its eyes: the beast was well known in the time of Marius, for certain of his soldiers seeing it, mistook it for a wild sheep, and pursued to take it; but the hair being removed by the motion of its flying, it slew all upon whom it looked: at length the Nomades, who knew the nature of the beast, destroyed it with darts at a distance, and carried it to the general Marius. Howsoever little truth there be in this story, it is a sufficient ground for poetical fictions, and all the fables that are ascribed to the gorgon.

V. 789. — *To purer air*

I speed my flight. — —]

It may not probably be unpleasant to the reader, to observe the manner

My mates ascend the ship; they strike their oars;
The mountains lessen, and retreat the shores;
Swift o'er the waves we fly; the fresh'ning gales
Sing through the shrouds, and stretch the swelling sails.

how the two great poets Homer and Virgil close the scene of their infernal adventures, by restoring their heroes to the earth. Ulysses returns by the same way he descended, of which we have a plain description in the beginning of this book: Virgil takes a different method, he borrows his conclusion from another part of Homer; in which he describes the two gates of sleep; the one is ivory, the other of horn. through the ivory gate, issue falsehoods, through the gate of horn, truths: Virgil dismisses *Æneas* through the gate of falsehood. Now what is this, but to inform us that all he relates is nothing but a dream, and that dream a falsehood? I submit it to the critics who are more disposed to find fault than I am, to determine whether Virgil ought to be censured for such an acknowledgment, or praised for his ingenuity?

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.